

Shortly before midnight, at 23.40, on June 22, Pavlov contacted his deputy, Lieutenant General Boldin, who had arrived by that time in Bialystok, at the headquarters of the 10th Army. From this moment, one of the most dramatic and dark stories of the first days of the war begins: ***“At the apparatus of Comrade.***

***Boldin. Question: Did you***

***get acquainted with the situation and what decisions did you make?***

***Answer: I got acquainted with the situation. Your decisions, which the chief of staff conveyed to Golubev, that Golubev should be in Narew (i.e., about the withdrawal of the 10th Army to the line of the Narew River. - M.S. ), Khatskelevich A south of Sokulka (concentration of the 6th mechanized corps in the forests northeast of Bialystok. - M.S. ), I think they are true. Listen to the order:***

***You must organize***

***a strike group consisting of the Khatskelevich corps plus the 36th cavalry division, Mostovenko units (i.e., the 11th mechanized corps) and strike in the general direction of Bialystok, Lipsk, south of Grodno with the task of destroying the enemy on the left bank R. Neman and prevent the exit of its parts of the Volkovysk region, after which the entire group will become subordinate to Kuznetsov. This is your next task. Lead it personally...” [419]*** Compared to the task set in Directive No. 3, Pavlov

“turned over” the spearhead of the offensive to the northeast, and this was, without a doubt, a reasonable initiative. An attempt to advance from Bialystok to Suwalki meant the need to push a huge mass of tanks through the swampy valley of the Biebrza River (which is equally difficult both from north to south and from south to north), and in the future the advancing units would end up on the territory of the “Suwalki ledge”, which the Germans prepared in advance for defense. The attack on Grodno meant moving across a relatively open area, in the presence of a full-fledged highway in the Sokulka, Grodno sector and in the absence of any enemy defenses (see Fig. 14). Paradoxically, the successful actions of the enemy contributed to the success of the planned counterattack: the 8th Army Corps and divisions of the 3rd Tank Group had already crossed the Neman north of Grodno

and were rapidly moving east, respectively, by the time Boldin’s KMG could concentrate and go on the offensive, on the left bank of the Neman would no longer have Germans. Thus, it was possible to pass “like a knife through butter” through the exposed flank and rear of the main enemy grouping and cut off his communications.

In parentheses, we note that in May 1942, exactly the same operation was carried out by the Germans. Then, in the course of what became sad

the famous Kharkov offensive operation, the Soviet troops crossed the Seversky Donets and, advancing in a westerly direction, reached the suburbs of Kharkov. After that, the German tank group struck from south to north and, advancing along both banks of the Seversky Donets, cut off the communications of the Soviet troops, who ended up in a giant "cauldron". The end result was the defeat of five Soviet armies, while more than 200 thousand soldiers and commanders of the Red Army were captured by the Germans. One can argue about how - taking into account the real combat capability of the opposing sides - the operation conceived by Pavlov could have ended, but at its initial stage, Boldin's KMG seemed to be "doomed to success." The main striking force of KMG

Boldin was the 6th mechanized corps (4th and 7th tank, 29th motorized division), one of the most powerful tank formations of the Red Army. The corps was created in the "first wave" of the formation (July - August 1940) and by June 41st was "to the eyeballs" equipped with military and auxiliary equipment. There were 3504 trucks and 894 special vehicles in the corps (the absolute first place among all mechanized corps of the Red Army), and taking into account 108 cars, there was one car for eight personnel - and this is not counting 1042 motorcycles. The mechanized corps received 260 tracked tractors,

including 22 of the most powerful Voroshilovets and 40 light armored Komsomols, 135 BA-10 cannon armored vehicles (also the first place in the entire Red Army) and 91 BA-20 reconnaissance armored vehicles. Radio communication facilities were presented (not counting the radios on tanks) in the amount of 51 powerful radio stations (5 RSB and 46 5-AK) and 64 "battalion" (RB, RRU, 6-PC). There were a lot of tanks in 6 MK, about a

thousand units. It is impossible to give exact figures, because new, only from the factory, KV and T-34 tanks were flowing into the corps, and at the same time obsolete light tanks were being written off. The total number of heavy HF monsters does not cause discrepancies - there were 114 of them in the 6th mechanized corps (63 in the 4th TD and 51 in the 7th TD). By June 1, there were 238 T-34 tanks, this figure is present in most documents. They were distributed at that time as follows: 160 in the 4th TD and 78 in the 7th TD. Later, during June, another 114 "thirty-fours" were delivered to Bialystok from the factories, and it can be assumed that it is these deliveries that explain the appearance in the report of the commander of the 7th Panzer Division of the figure of 150 T-34 tanks. Ultimately, the number of tanks of "new types" is in the range from 352 to 466, with the most plausible estimate of 424 units.

The list of weapons of the 6th mechanized corps was by no means exhausted by tanks of "new types". There were also 19 three-tower T-28s in good condition (there were 58 units in total), about 420 BTs (not counting worn-out BT-2s), 67 T-26s (not counting machine guns) and at least 44 KhT-26 flamethrowers (there are information that the 29th MD included 17 more supernumerary XT-26s). This is how the mechanized corps turned out, with two full-fledged tank divisions, having about 370 tanks (including two hundred KV and T-34s) each, and a motorized division, in terms of the number of tanks (180-200 units) superior to

many German tank divisions. Against the background of such crushing power, the rest of the "components" of Boldin's KMG noticeably fade, but their combat potential was not at all zero. In the 11th mechanized corps - even taking into account 15% of tanks that were out of order by the time the war began, even if we take for granted the maximum German claims for the number of tanks knocked out in battle near Konyukha, Grodno (110 units) - there should still be more than two hundred serviceable tanks and several dozens of armored vehicles; with all the reservations about the incomplete staffing of the corps with personnel and artillery (specific figures, by the way, no one has named to this day), 11 MK at least corresponded to one "designed tank division". And this is a quite tangible addition to the three divisions of the 6th mechanized corps, taking into account which about 1.2 thousand tanks should have been concentrated on the front of 25-30 km - there was no such concentration of armored vehicles in 1941 in

any other point of the Eastern front [136]. On June 23, the 124th howitzer artillery regiment (front reserve) was included in the KMG. The regiment was armed with 48 152 mm howitzers, and in terms of the total weight of a volley, it was one and a half times superior to the Wehrmacht infantry division. Two divisions of the 6th Cavalry Corps were not superfluous either (initially, only the 36th Cavalry Division was supposed to be included in the KMG, but in reality the 6th Cavalry Division was also involved in the counterattack). Of course, no one was going to attack with horse lava through forests and swamps; the horse in the cavalry division of the era of the 2nd MV served as a vehicle, in some respects (high cross-country ability and independence from the provision of gasoline) superior to plywood trucks of that time. The high mobility of the cavalry divisions was immediately confirmed in practice: during the day they covered about 70-90 km (6th cd from Lomzha to the east, 36th cd from Volkovysk to the west) and

concentrated in the area of Suwalki, Krynk. And the divisions were not easy. The 6th Kuban-Terskaya Red Banner named after S. M. Budyonny was, without exaggeration, an elite unit of the Red Army, a true "forge of personnel" for its

In the autumn of 1919, the division was commanded by Timoshenko, the future marshal and people's commissar of defense of the USSR; in the following year, in 1920, Meretskov, the future marshal and chief of the General Staff, became assistant chief of staff of the 6th cd, the future marshal Moskalenko began his brilliant military career as chief of staff of the artillery regiment of the division. The 6th Cavalry Corps in the 30s was commanded by two future marshals - Zhukov and Eremenko.

In September 1939, the 6th Cavalry Division was part of a horse-drawn mechanized group, which, under the command of the same Boldin, "liberated" Bialystok (that is, took the Polish city they had captured from the hands of the Germans). So the combat area was well known to the fighters and commanders of the division for a long time. "On the roads we know for our beloved people's commissar, we will lead the fighting horses ..." We also note that in addition to horses, sabers and carbines in the 6th cd there were 155 light and 64 easel machine guns, 15 anti-aircraft machine guns and 4 anti-aircraft 76-mm guns, 8 howitzers of caliber 122 mm, 24 76 mm guns, 48 BT tanks (as part of the division's tank regiment), 9 armored vehicles and 66 (sixty-six) radio stations. If Pavlov's order had been carried out exactly and Boldin's KMG had launched an offensive on June

23, then this entire giant steel armada would have fallen on the one and only 256th Wehrmacht infantry division, which had advanced from the river earlier and farther than anyone else. Biebrzha to the southeast (the second division of the 20th Army Corps, the 162nd Infantry Division was just reaching the northern bank of the Biebrzha River near Lipsk). But on June 23, KMG and its numerous commanders (Marshal Kulik, Lieutenant General Boldin, commander of the 10th Army, Major General Golubev, commander of the 6th Mechanized Corps, Major General Khatskelevich) collected their thoughts and concentrated troops. Although from **the "forest area north of Grudek" (where** the tank divisions of the 6th MK were advanced on the night of June 23) to Kuznitsa, only 40 km in a straight line (or 62 km along the road through Bolshaya Berestovitsa, Krynki, Sokulka), the advancement of tank divisions to their original positions took a day and a half.

At some point on June 23 (the exact time is not indicated on the document) Pavlov's patience snapped, and a telegram flew to the headquarters of the 10th Army:

***"Why didn't the mechanized corps attack, who is to blame, immediately step up actions and don't panic, but control. It is necessary to beat the enemy in an organized manner, and not run away without control*** (this phrase did not appear by chance, because on the evening of June 22, all the military, party and Chekist authorities left Bialystok, moving, for starters, to the forest near Grudek. - ***M.S. ) . You must know each division where it is, when, what it does and what results it has. Why don't you give the task of attacking the mechanized corps? .. Remember, if you do not act actively, the Military Council will no longer endure.*** [420]

Having poured out his soul in this way, Pavlov on the same day, on June 23, sends to three addresses (Boldin, Golubev and Kuznetsov) a combat order (b / n), in which the task was set to "continue the offensive", and to a much greater depth:

***"From the morning of June 24, you should: 1. Shock group consisting of the 6th and 11th mechanized corps, the 36th cavalry division under the command of Comrade. Boldin to continue a decisive offensive in the general direction of Grodno, capture this city and continue the offensive along both banks of the river. Neman on Druskininkai and Merkin. The ultimate goal of the day is to occupy the Merkina metro station (60 km north of Grodno. - M.S. ) . Keep in mind the provision of operations on the western bank of the river. Neman from the side of the August forests and from the side of Suwalki. 2. Commander of the troops of the 3rd Army comrade. Kuznetsov with the 85th and 56th rifle divisions to attack in the general direction on Grodno and gain a foothold to the north of this city. With the 27th Infantry Division, advance on the front of Labno (a western suburb of Grodno. - M.S. ) , Lipsk, Dombrova, where to gain a foothold ... Immediately report on the orders given. [421]***

In the meantime, the German infantry really continued its offensive, successfully launched on June 22. The operational report of the headquarters of the 8th AK from

June 16-15 on June 23 reports: ***"The 8th army corps broke the last resistance of the enemy west of the river. Neman, occupied Grodno and is moving east. The fighting at Sopotskin is still going on. Our troops reached the railroad Grodno - Porechye. A large number of tanks and artillery pieces were captured..."*** The final report of the 8th Army Corps for June 23: ***"The enemy on 23.6 failed to offer organized resistance. More serious enemy resistance was noted west of Grodno. In Sopotskin, a strong enemy group is surrounded, which is putting up stubborn resistance. Grodno was taken by the forces of the 8th division. Lots of trophies..."*** Plans for the next day: ***"The 8th Army Corps on 24.06 continues the pursuit of the defeated Russian 3rd Army; the task is to access the Lida-Vilnius highway (80-100 km east of the Neman. - M.S. )". [412]***

The 161st and 28th Infantry Divisions were advancing eastward, having virtually no enemy in front of them, while the 28th Infantry Division by the end of the day took a tactically important inter-lake defile in the area of Cape Ozery (24 km east of Grodno). The 8th Infantry Division was divided into two battle groups: the main forces of the division moved to the right bank of the Neman and advanced along

highway to Skidel, while by the end of the day the advanced units were already 1 km from the Kotra River, the right-flank 84th Infantry Regiment occupied Grodno and slowly moved south along the left bank of the Neman, repelling numerous counterattacks from units of the 11th mechanized corps; As for the Soviet 85th Rifle Division, it (judging by Opersvodka No. 4 of the headquarters of the Western Front) by 17-00 "took the line along the river. Svisloch" and "put itself in order", that is, it rapidly retreated 20 km from the turn of the river. Salmon, taken on the evening of June 22. [422] In the final operational summary of the headquarters of the 8th Infantry Division for June 23, active and inconclusive actions of Soviet aviation **were** noted : . ) . **None of the units of the division was seriously injured.**

It is worth noting the quality of the work of German military intelligence: in the report of the headquarters of the 8th AK dated June 23, the correct numbers of the Soviet divisions are indicated (56th, 85th, 27th, 2nd and 8th rifle, 29th tank), the fact of the transfer of the headquarters of the 3rd Army to Lunno was established; the Germans were mistaken only in that they called the 204th MD of the 11th mechanized corps the "86th

motorized brigade." [423] The achievements of the German 20th Army Corps on June 23 were more modest. In the railway case of the case we read:

**"11.00. The attack on the Kuznitsa carried out by the forward detachment was repulsed ... The command of the 256th division offers the command of the corps to conduct an attack on the Forge with the forces of the 481st Infantry Regiment (regiment commander - Colonel Weber) and the forward detachment using artillery attached to them ... The enemy is fiercely defending himself in a wooded and hilly areas north of Kuznitsa, in places using dug-in tanks** (most likely, it was the 33rd Panzer Division of the 11th Mechanized Corps, which was concentrated on the line of the Lososna River in the Kuznitsa region and to the north on June 22. - M.S. ) . **The command of the corps believes that it will no longer be possible to take the Forge on June 23 ... The 329th regiment of the 162nd infantry division replaces the guards of the 256th infantry division on the Kamenka River in the western direction and around Dombrov. The remaining parts of the division are concentrated in the Lipsk area.**

**June 24. 01.20. The forge was taken by the forces of the 481st Infantry Regiment with the forward detachment of the 256th Division. The command post of the corps moved to Novy Dvor. The 256th division advances further to the southeast in the direction of Podlipki** (settlement 4.5 km southeast of Kuznitsa. - **M.S.** ) ". [411] The

Germans managed to occupy the Forge (in the next few days this inconspicuous place will be at the epicenter of a fierce battle) on the night of June 23-24. By noon, the 481st Infantry Regiment

crossed to the right bank of the river. Lososna, the rest of the 256th Infantry Division went to the river north of Kuznitsa to the settlement. Bakuny (at the intersection of the river and the highway Sokulka, Grodno). The 162nd Infantry Division began to advance from the river. Biebrzha to the south and advanced units went to m. Sidra. It was in this position that the Germans found the counterattack of KMG Boldin, which began in the morning of June 24. **Attempted offensive**  
According

to sound logic, according to

all the canons of military science, a steel avalanche of Soviet tanks (four hundred 76-mm guns covered with armor that was indestructible for German "mallets" - and this is not counting hundreds of light BT and T-26) should have been swept away, crushed, grind the 481st Infantry Regiment into powder, and then the rest of the 256th Division. But none of this happened - neither on June 24, nor in the next two days. Strictly speaking, nothing at all that went beyond local, short-term problems happened to one of the army corps (20 AK) of the Wehrmacht. A thousand tanks and tens of thousands of soldiers of the 6th mechanized corps "scattered" incomprehensibly how, where and why. Despite the fact that in recent years many articles and books have been published that discuss the history of the defeat of KMG Boldin, clarity has not increased.

Archival funds of the 6th mechanized corps and its divisions nominally exist, but traditionally there are no primary operational documents. And this is somewhat strange, if we recall that according to the staff list, the Mechanized Corps Directorate included 11 clerks and 13 more people, whose position is designated as "head of office work" - there was someone to write down the operational summary, and there was someone to prepare it (96 people of senior command staff) , and even 1042 motorcycles could have taken out a couple of cardboard folders with papers during the retreat ... There are exactly two documents recorded after the rout; they were compiled in the same month, but under significantly different conditions. These are the report of the commander of the 7th Panzer Division, Major General Borzilov, received by the GABTU on August 4, and the protocol of interrogation in German captivity of the commander of the 4th Panzer Division, Major General Potaturchev, dated August 30, 1941. Borzilov's report is small, only three pages of typewritten text , the protocol of interrogation of Potaturchev is much longer (the general was very talkative with the Germans), but the essence of the matter - the description of the participation of the divisions entrusted to him in the counterattack near Grodno - in both cases, only a few phrases are devoted.

Protocol of interrogation of Potaturchev:

***“After concentrating in the Grudek area, both tank regiments, the 7th and 8th, were sent on a march to Grodno, where units of the 11th division adjoined them on the right (as in the text, but we are <sup>left</sup> talking, of course, about the 11th mechanized corps) , - units of the 7th division, for defense (???) on a front 12 km wide at the turn of Indura, Kuznitsa from German units advancing from the direction of Grodno. About the order of subordination [of units of the division?] he could not give clear information. His command post was in the Grudek area. Division control was impossible, because they were far from each other (so in the text) . Already in the first days, parts of his division were defeated by the German Air Force. With most of the tanks, he advanced to the [indicated] line [according to] the order. He had strict orders not to retreat. As a result of the advanced German forces bypassing and enveloping Grodno in the direction of Volkovysk, the division was forced to retreat and during the battle in the Bialystok (???) region was exhausted and completely defeated. On June 30, with a few [remaining] soldiers and***

It's hard to understand anything here. The internal inconsistency and confusion of the testimonies are exacerbated by the problem of double translation (from Russian into German and from German into Russian). It is known for certain that Potaturchev's division - like all other formations of Boldin's KMG - had the task of attacking, and not at all on defense; "strict order" demanded to advance to Merkina, and not fight back "from the German units advancing from the direction of Grodno." The bypass and envelopment from the right bank of the Neman (more precisely, the impending threat of such envelopment) really pushed Boldin's KMG units to retreat, but they retreated, of course, not to the west to Bialystok, but in the exact opposite direction, to Volkovysk, Slonim . As the main reason for the defeat, Potaturchev names the impact of German aviation (***“parts of his division were defeated by the German Air***

***Force”*** ). It's not even worth wasting time on proving the fundamental absurdity of such a statement, let's just turn over a few more pages of the interrogation protocol: ***“When asked if German air attacks on tanks were successful, he replied that once during a raid of “pieces” (German slang for dive bombers Ju -87) there was not a single hit on a column of 16 tanks. The bombs did not hit any of the tanks. Shrapnel impact did no harm.*** And this is not the only example of self-denial. At the beginning of the interrogation protocol we read: ***“The fact that the Germans found many undamaged tanks was given the following explanation: they either had overheating [engines] or no longer had fuel.”*** In a few



pages: **"Engine failures, in his opinion, were not frequent, since almost all the tanks of his division were brand new."** After that, an entry appears in the protocol: **"Here he contradicts himself."**

Perhaps the only significant (and, in particular, largely explaining the illogicality of Potaturchev's testimony) fact is contained in a short phrase: **"His command post was in the Grudek area."** This looks especially eloquent in combination with the fact that **"radio communication was not established to prevent eavesdropping and direction finding from the German side."** From Grudek to Kuznica 45 km in a straight line. How is it possible to direct the offensive of a tank division, being at such a distance from the battlefield, and even with radio communications turned off? Isn't Potaturchev's testimony so contradictory because he was forced to talk about what he personally did not see or hear?

Now let's turn to Major General Borzilov's report. It was written in normal Russian, without double translation, all the words are familiar - but it is difficult to understand the meaning of what happened:

**"Fulfilling the task, the division in the morning of 24.6 concentrated on the attack line south of Sokulka and Staroe Dubovoye (settlement 8 km west of Indura . - M.S. ) . Intelligence found that there was no enemy tank division, but there were small groups of tanks (???) interacting with infantry and cavalry (???) . 24-25.6 division, following the order of the corps commander and Marshal Comrade Kulik, struck: the 14th tank regiment - Staroe Oak and further Grodno, the 13th tank regiment - Kuznitsa and further Grodno from the west, where it was destroyed and dispersed to 2 -x infantry battalions and up to 2 artillery batteries.**

**After completing the task, parts of the division concentrated in the area of Kuznitsa and Staroe Dubovoe, while parts of the division lost 18 tanks, burned out and stuck in the swamps. On June 25-26, until 21.00, the division fought a defensive battle in cooperation with the 29th motorized division and the 36th cavalry division, delivered short blows in front of the front of the 128th motorized rifle regiment of the 29th mechanized division and the 36th cavalry division**

What does "after completing the task" mean? The task, in accordance with the order of the front commander, was to occupy Merkina, and by the end of the day on June 24th. From the text of the report, it seems to follow that the order received by Borzilov from the commander of the mechanized corps set a less ambitious task - to reach Grodno. In fact, the division after the so-called. "completing the task" returns to the original area (Forge, Old Oak). And with what kind of enemy is this tank division, which has three hundred tanks, and even in cooperation with two other divisions, led after that

"defensive battle"? An armored monster fought off a Wehrmacht infantry division for two days? Yes, and did not fight back:

***"By the end of 26.6.41, the enemy, having used the reserve (what "reserve"? The 129th Infantry Division, transferred to the 20th AK, was on the march and by the evening of 26.6 was still in the Sidra area, having the task of launching an offensive from the Kuznitsa area on the morning of June 28. - M.S. ), led the offensive. At 21.00, units of the 36th Cavalry Division and the 128th Motorized Rifle Division of the 29th MD began to retreat randomly (in a panic). I took measures to restore the situation, but this was not successful. I gave the order to cover the retreating units of the 29th MD and the 36th cd, in the area of Cape Kryнки I made a second attempt to detain the retreating units, where I managed to detain the 128th MRR (there is no longer any talk of detaining the enemy. - M.S. ) and on the night of 26 to 27.6 cross the river. Svisloch east of Cape Krinki (this was the begin***

The most important question is where did the tanks of the 7th Panzer Division go? Lost in battle and drowned in a swamp (you still had to be able to find a swamp in the Old Oak, Kuznitsa area - on the topographic map there is a hilly plain with rare copses) 18 units. Other combat losses in the report are not explicitly named. The types of destroyed tanks are not indicated, but there is another report signed by Borzilov on July 28, in which he writes: ***"It should be noted that it is mainly guns and machine guns that are put out of action, otherwise the T-34 machine perfectly withstands the blows of 37-mm guns, does not speaking of HF . [424]*** Be that as it may, as of June 22, the division had 368 tanks (this is the figure obtained by summing up the data given in Borzilov's report) [137]. The arithmetic difference is 350. For the Wehrmacht, this is a tank fleet of two divisions. Where is all this? Did the Germans bomb out on the first day of the

surprise attack? ***"At 0400, enemy aircraft bombed Bialystok, Khorosh and Novoselki, but parts of the division were not bombarded, except for the remnants of 13 TP. Losses: 26 people. wounded and 4 killed, the materiel was not injured.*** Maybe enemy aircraft bombed the tank columns of the division on the march to the battlefield? ***"The division, following the order, crashed into traffic jams created on all roads of the disorderly retreat of the rear of the army from the mountains. Bialystok (the road service was not established, thanks to which everything ran randomly). The division, being on the march and in the area of concentration from 4.00 23.6.41 to 9.00 and from 11.00 to 14.00, was under enemy air strikes all the time. During the period of the march and stay in the concentration area until 14.00, the division had losses: a)***

**tanks - 63 destroyed and dispersed by enemy aircraft, b) all the rear of the regiments were defeated, especially the rear of the 13th regiment suffered. Measures have been taken to collect**

**dispersed rears and tanks. [408]** Disperse flies, birds, unorganized crowd of hooligans. The Charter of the Red Army did not provide for such a type of maneuver, nor such a category of losses as "dispersed by aviation." Presumably, for this reason, in all publications of Borzilov's report, these incorrect words were omitted from the text. They did the same with the words **"the materiel was not damaged"** in the description of the bombing on June 22 - they did not embarrass ideologically immature readers. (Fig. 29.) And rightly so - the myth of the all-destroying German aviation must be cherished and cherished! However, to hell with them, with falsifiers, something else is more important - how could such a "maneuver" be practically carried out? No matter how much you accelerate, you can't run away from

Perhaps the answer to this question was found in the description of the combat operations [138] of the 8th Air Corps of the Luftwaffe: **"During the bombing, all the crews abandoned their tanks in fear, the horses broke away from the carts and galloped over the terrain without riders. Scary pictures! [425]** Indeed, a terrible picture of an untrained and unmotivated army, in which people behave like unfortunate unreasonable horses (inside the tank, even more so if it is a KV or T-34, during the bombing it is much safer than outside).

Suppose the worst (and unlikely, moreover) - **"measures to collect dispersed tanks"** did not lead to any result, it was not possible to collect anyone. 63 tanks were included in the list of irretrievable losses.  $368 - 63 - 18 = 287$ . Not a single Wehrmacht tank division on the Eastern Front had such a number of tanks (even if the Pz-I combat training tankettes are included in the category of "tanks"). Where, how and why was Borzilov's division able to lose almost three hundred tanks? They had to be abandoned due to lack of fuel? **"Provision of the division with combat equipment: B-70 and**

**KB-70 fuel and lubricants** (aviation gasoline for light tank engines. - **M.S.** ) - **3 refueling, diesel fuel - 1 refueling."** This is what was in the division at the start of the war. Badly. There is a clear violation of numerous pre-war orders, according to which there should have been 3 refueling stations for all types of fuel and lubricants directly in the units. And yet, from Bialystok to Grodno, along the most "crooked route" (through Grudek, B. Berestovitsa, Sokulka) is only 120 km; the cruising range at one gas station was 180 km for the heavy KV and 300 km for the T-34 (it was not by chance that people invented and used an economical diesel engine in transport equipment). What is the problem? And if the problem with fuel nevertheless appeared, it can also be solved:

**"We managed to get one gas station [from] the burned-out warehouses Kuznitsa and the Krinki metro station (in general, fuels and lubricants were mined as anyone could)." [408]** Strange use of the verb "get"; on its territory, from a stationary warehouse located 40 km from the place of permanent deployment of the division - is this called "mined as anyone could"? How did the Germans "extract" gasoline on foreign territory, advancing at a pace of up to 100 km per day?

Дивизия, выполняя приказ, врезалась в созданные на всех дорогах пробки беспорядочного отступления тылов армии и гор.Белостока (дорожная служба не была налажена, благодаря чего все беспорядочно бежало) Дивизия, находясь на марше и в районе сосредотачивания в 4.00 23.6.41 до 9.00 и с 11.00 до 14.00 все время находилась под ударами авиации противника.

За период марша и нахождения в районе сосредотачивания до 14.00 дивизия имела потери:

а) танков - 63 разбитых и разогнанных авиацией противника.

б) разбиты все тылы полков, в особенности пострадал тыл 13 полка  
Приняты меры по сбору разогнанных тылов и танков.

8. Танковой дивизии противника не оказалось в районе Бельска, благодаря чего дивизия не была использована. Поступили новые сведения: танковая дивизия противника прорвалась между Гродно и Сокулка. В 14.00 23.6 дивизия получила новую задачу - двигаться в направлении Сокулка-Кузница, уничтожить прорвавшуюся ТД с выходом в район сбора

Rice. 29. Report of the Commander of the 7th Panzer

Division Now let's try to look at the situation "from the other side of the front." From German documents it clearly follows that a two-day (June 24-25) battle with tanks in the area of Forge, Sokulka, Sidra actually took place, however, assessments of its scale were given various and often contradictory. Let's start first of all with the Journal of Combat Operations 20 AK (it was his divisions that took the main blow of Boldin's KMG), and in an extensive array of information we will try to find the answer to just two questions: how many tanks did the Germans see on the battlefield and how many tanks did they manage to destroy (more precisely say, to call destroyed).

**"June 24 ... At about 10.00, the forward combat regimental group** (256th infantry regiment) **was attacked by enemy tanks from the Sokulka area** (this is the first report of a counterattack that had begun, and, judging by the time and geography, these were not tanks of the 4th or 7th tank divisions; most likely, we are talking about parts of the 29th mechanized division, which was earlier than other formations of the 6th mechanized c

advanced to the border of the river. Salmon. — *M.S. ). The enemy attacks were successfully repulsed ...*

*At about 12.00, the combat group of the 481st Infantry Regiment 256th Infantry Division crossed the river. Salmon ... The task of the corps is a further attack on Indura. Meanwhile, enemy tank attacks are intensifying (around noon) on the positions of 481 points. During the fighting, a large number of enemy tanks were destroyed. It became necessary to withdraw back to the previous positions the vanguard of the 256th division, which had already advanced east of Podlipka (settlement 5 km east of Kuznitsa. - M.S. ) . The 162nd division was also attacked by enemy tanks from the south from the side of Sidra (and this message is probably connected with the actions of the 29th md. - M.S. ) . These attacks were also successfully repulsed. Enemy batteries from*

*positions east of Sokulok fired at Kuznitsa and significantly interfered with the 256th division from carrying out its combat mission (judging by the firing range, this is the first and last mention of the actions of the 124th howitzer art regiment. - M.S. ) . The attacks of our dive bombers broke these batteries and, in addition, destroyed the enemy tanks ...*

*At about 17.30, the army headquarters was informed by radio that in the Lunno, Indura, Sokulka area there was a large accumulation of enemy tanks (probably they had reached their original position for the attack). Continued enemy tank attacks suggest that the enemy intends to retake the Kuznitsa and push the 256th Division out of its bridgehead [on the east bank of the river. Salmon]. Until the evening, the 256th division successfully repulsed 12 enemy tank attacks. During the fighting, approximately 80 enemy tanks were knocked out. At the same time, the 210th division of "assault guns" and the 2nd division of the 4th anti-aircraft regiment (subdivisions attached to the corps. - M.S. ) especially distinguished themselves . The 162nd division, during the advance on Sidra, also had to repel enemy tank attacks. More than 20 enemy tanks were knocked out.*

*Around 2100, the headquarters of the 162nd division reported on an unexpectedly powerful enemy tank attack on Sidra. Since the division adopted the battle formation for the offensive and there was no organized continuous front of defense, there was a threat of a breakthrough of enemy tanks. For some time, a critical situation arose, which was soon resolved nevertheless ...*

*Final summary for June 24th. The course of the battles: after the occupation of Kuznitsa in the early morning of June 24, the offensive of the 256th Infantry Division continued on Podlipki. 12 powerful enemy tank attacks from the southwest and southeast*

**stopped the advance of the division. Despite massive attacks (about 100 tanks with artillery support), the enemy did not manage to advance to the Forge. [411]** The morning (from 7.00

on June 25) report of the headquarters of the 9th Army of the Wehrmacht already fixes the retreat of the enemy strike group to the east: **"Yesterday's tank attacks of Kuznitsa and the area south of Grodno have apparently been completed. On the roads of Indura, Ross and Indura, Bolshaya Berestovitsa, large motorized columns are moving in an unknown direction** . However, already at 18.05, the army headquarters was forced to admit: **"Southwest of Grodno, on the line of Dombrov, Sidra, Kuznitsa, tank attacks continue."** [471] It is not entirely clear how to connect this report with the previous one (about the withdrawal of large mechanized columns to the east), but on the afternoon of June 25, someone really attacked, and with even greater

force, the positions of 20 AK near Kuznitsa. In the railway department of the corps we read: **"June 25 ... 14.00. General Kauffman, commander of the 256th Infantry Division, personally reports on a powerful enemy tank attack, including super-heavy tanks, on Kuznitsa and the positions of his division (about 200 tanks) from the southeast direction (this, as can be judged from the identified German documents, is the largest tank attack in June 1941 on the entire Eastern Front. - M.S. ) . The headquarters of the corps immediately requested dive bombers,**

**which quickly took off and dispersed the enemy's attack with tangible losses for him ... "** [411] It is likely that this episode of the battle is reflected in the description of the combat operations of the 8th Luftwaffe air corps: **"At dawn on June 25, the Russians continue their counterattacks west of Grodno at the Forge and at Dombrov Belostotskaya. This is followed by our first counter action at 4 pm with good success. Here again many tanks and vehicles are being destroyed. Attack aircraft in a long-trying manner go to the cavalry, horse-drawn artillery and infantry. The Russians**

On the night of June 25-26, the command of the 20th Army Corps issues an order in which it sets the task of going over to the defensive and sums up the results of two days of fighting: **"The 20th Army Corps was able to repel on June 24 and June 25 numerous, sometimes very strong enemy attacks in the front line 162th and 256th divisions. At the same time, units of the 256th division, acting on the defensive, repelled 13 enemy attacks and destroyed 108 tanks; troops of the 162nd division have so far destroyed 56 enemy tanks. The divisions were given strong support by the 2nd division of the 4th anti-aircraft regiment, which knocked out 21 enemy tanks"**

**which only 25.06 destroyed 43 tanks, 44 trucks and 5 artillery batteries of the enemy.**

[427] So, even the most massive attacks involved -

according to the attacked themselves - from 100 to 200 tanks (let's not forget that "fear has big eyes", and the time and nerves for cold-blooded calculations at the time of the enemy attack tanks are usually not enough). In just two days, 228 tanks were declared destroyed; by what "overestimation factor" this number should be divided - this can only be discussed today

guess.

It is noteworthy that in the evening (from 22.00 on June 25) the report of the headquarters of the 9th Army gave a much more derogatory assessment of the actions of the Soviet tank units : **values. The counterattacks were aimed at stopping the advance of the German troops on the Indura. Sometimes people in civilian clothes were found in wrecked tanks. Abandoned tanks were found in the forests.**" [472] The morning of the evening is trickier, and in the morning (from 8.00 on June 26) report, the German staff officers finally "guessed" what the tanks abandoned by the crews meant: "Undamaged tanks **without crews found in the forests allow us to conclude that the crews waiting in safe shelters for the moment to attack** . [473] No other explanation came to the minds of the Wehrmacht officers... As expected, the heaviest blow (and the biggest declared victories) fell on the 256th Infantry Division near Kuznitsa, i.e. in the action zone of the 4th and 7th and tank divisions. The types of destroyed tanks are not specified, but the document shows that the largest number of destroyed tanks was declared by infantry divisions, whose anti-

tank weapons consisted of 37-mm "mallets" (and at best - two 50-mm anti-tank guns per infantry regiment); only anti-aircraft gunners had a real technical ability to hit the T-34 and KV, but, judging by the text of the order, only 21

tank.

Fortunately for historians, a very detailed report "On the actions and successes of the 2nd division of the 4th anti-aircraft regiment in the period 22–27.6.41" has also been preserved. [428] The division consisted of five divisions (batteries) with serial numbers from 6 to 10 (in the German anti-aircraft regiment, continuous numbering was adopted for all three divisions). Heavy 88-mm anti-aircraft guns in the amount of four pieces were only in three batteries (in this case, in the 6th, 7th and 8th), two other batteries (9th and 10th) had 12 light 20- mm anti-aircraft guns each; in addition, the 6th battery had two 20 mm anti-aircraft guns. Thus, shoot four hundred Soviet tanks of "new types"

there were one dozen 88-mm anti-aircraft guns. In reality, there were several otherwise:

***“About 13.00 on June 24, both batteries (8th and 9th) took up positions at height 236, southeast of Podlipki, 4 km southeast of Kuznitsa. The advance of the advanced units stopped. Enemy tanks attacked our positions from early afternoon until late evening. Already during the first attack, by order of both battery commanders, all the guns were dispersed on the front slopes of the heights to counter the attacking armored vehicles and destroy them. During a fierce defensive battle, under continuous machine-gun fire from tanks (yes, that's exactly what the text says, and this is very strange, given that the KV or T-34 could respond not only with “machine-gun fire”, but also with a full-weight 76-mm projectile. - M.S. ) 9 enemy attacks were repulsed. Until 18.30 on 24.06.41, a total of 20 enemy tanks were destroyed by two batteries. Exceptional courage and bravery was shown by the commanders of the 8th and 9th batteries, Lieutenant Turm and Dickel ...***

***At about 1400 on June 24, the 6th battery left its positions 2 km southwest of the Forge and moved to a hill two kilometers east of the Forge. Tasks: air defense, as well as protection against tank attacks, which were advanced from the south to the Forge. At 16.50 15 enemy tanks were moving in the direction of Lunno, Kuznitsa. The 6th battery opened fire and destroyed 5 tanks. The rest of the tanks retreated . On the night of 24/25/06/41, at about 03:45,***

***three enemy tanks attacked the positions of the 8th and 9th batteries. One enemy vehicle was destroyed,***

*the rest are gone...*

***On June 25, at about 04:30, the 7th battery of the regiment redeployed from the area north of Kuznitsa to the location of the 162nd Infantry Division to counter enemy armored vehicles seen at Sidra and destroy them. After completing the task, the 7th battery returned to the 256th infantry division at a position north of Kuznitsa.***  
[428] And that's

all. Further in the report, only isolated skirmishes with small groups of tanks are noted. The overall result: during the five days of the war, anti-aircraft gunners claimed 31 wrecked enemy tanks (the types of vehicles are not indicated, the very fact of the appearance of heavy tanks is not mentioned at all). However, the most impressive is the list of their own losses: ***“In total, during the period June 22-27, the division lost 9 people wounded, 1 person subsequently died of wounds . ”*** Two days of a ***“fierce defensive battle”*** (and the rest of the days the personnel did not spend on a hike), many enemy tanks were destroyed, 1 killed, 8 wounded. **Lebezhany, New Mouse**



On the evening of June 27, Opersvodka No. 8 was compiled at the headquarters of the Western Front (by that time it had already moved to Mogilev). Communication between the front command and the headquarters of the disintegrating corps and armies was already almost absent, reports were delivered hundreds of kilometers away by communications delegates, so it is not surprising that the summary for June 27 mentioned the events and positions of the troops of the

previous days. There were such words in Opersvodka No. 8: ***“The 6th mechanized corps - the 4th tank division, by 18.00 on 24.6.41, concentrated in the area of Lebezhany, Novaya Mysh, with losses of up to 20-26%, mainly due to small tanks ; KV tanks do not***

***always suffer losses even from direct bomb hits. The 7th Panzer Division was on the march between***

***Volkovysk and Baranovichi, fighting with the rearguards west of Volkovysk. Motor losses, by 23.00 on 24.6.41, concentrated in the Stolbtsy area. [429]***

A simple phrase about the concentration area and the state of the 4th TD aroused genuine interest from readers and writers; a cursory Internet search for "Lebezhany, New Mouse" yields hundreds of references. Alas, the attention of the public was attracted not at all by what was really interesting there, but by a completely ordinary statement of fact (***“KV tanks do not always suffer losses even from direct bomb hits”***) [139]. Almost all the authors who wrote about Boldin's KMG military operations cited the summary (this gives the text solidity - a link to a real "archival" document, detailed, up to the mention of tiny towns, the geography of the theater of operations), no one had any doubts, surprises, objections. While working on my first book ("Barrel and Hoops"), I tried to find these

very Lebezhany, New Mouse, but no matter how much I looked at the maps of the Sokulka, Kuznitsa, Indura regions available to me, I could not find these or consonant names of settlements. Time passed, and the fast Internet and the Google-map search engine reached me. Novaya Mysh [140] was discovered instantly - 4 km northwest of Baranovichi, on the other side of the main highway. In pre-war Poland, it was the administrative center of a gmina (volost in Russian); there was also a small town of Lebezhany in that gmina, but it is no longer on modern maps. What does it mean? From Staroe Dubovoe, Indura, Kuznitsa (the 4th Panzer Division seemed to have fought there on June

24-25) to Baranovichi 170 km along the shortest road direction (a country road to Krynka and then through B. Berestovitsa to the main highway). In the course of the movement, one will inevitably have to cross four (!) Rivers: Svisloch, Ross, Zelvyanka,

Schara. Yes, not the largest rivers, not the Amur and the Yenisei, but tanks need a bridge to cross them. And not a rustic log bridge, but a serious structure capable of withstanding a 30-ton T-34 and a 50-ton KV. There are few such bridges in those places, it is not at all easy to build a ferry crossing of the required carrying capacity, especially taking into account the non-stop bombing attacks of enemy aircraft (the Germans perfectly understood the operational significance of the Bialystok-Baranovichi highway). And that's not all! By the morning of June 24, the 47th tank corps of the

Wehrmacht reached Slonim, and all day on June 24 (as well as the next two days) a fierce battle was going on in the Slonim, Baranovichi strip, and with varying success. In such an environment, it would have been quite difficult to "slip by the mouse" through Slonim to Baranovichi (40 km along a modern road); most likely, I had to bypass Slonim from the north, through forests and swamps, and this is additional loss of time.

Summary: in order to be in the Lebezhany, Novaya Mysh area on the evening of June 24, a tank division had to start moving from Grudek (the starting point for the concentration of tank divisions of the 6th MK) no later than the morning of June 23. 170 km of the way and four crossings in two days is the limit of the real marching capabilities of the tank units of the Red Army of that time. In other words, on the battlefield at the Forge, the division did not even

stopped by.

Is it possible to draw such far-reaching conclusions on the basis of one date in one single document? Of course not. The compilers (or publishers, which is also possible) of operational summary No. 8 could simply make a mistake with the date, the typist girl pressed the wrong key, and June 27 turned into 24; to tell the truth, "the girl made a mistake" twice - after all, there is also a mention of a motorcycle regiment of the 6th mechanized corps nearby, which regiment **"by 23.00 24.6.41 concentrated in the Stolbtsy area"**, i.e. swept another 60 km from Baranovichi to the northeast ... In any case, I did not change / supplement anything with subsequent reprints of the book - until the moment when another document was found in the archive fund of the Operational Directorate of the Western Front Headquarters, in a file with the boring title "Miscellaneous Correspondence" .

Most likely, it was this report that served as the basis for compiling Opersvodka No. 8. On a piece of paper yellowed from time to time, it is written with a simple pencil:

***"The data collected by the delegates of the headquarters of the front established: 1. 25.6 Baranovichi was in our hands. The 17th Mechanized Corps put out of action up to 40 enemy tanks with artillery fire and continues to***

**hold your positions.**

**2. The 4th Panzer Division on 24.6 at 17-18 hours was in the area of Lebezhany, Novaya Mysh (the delegate saw the division in person); losses up to 20–25%, mainly light tanks, KVs do not even take direct hits from bombs.**

**3. The 7th Panzer Division was on the march between Volkovysk and Baranovichi, fighting as a rear guard west of**

**Volkovysk. 4. The 13th mechanized corps on 24.6 was assembled in the area of Stolbtsy, Baranovichi [inaudible] individual**

**people and vehicles. 5. 24.6 at 23.00 in the Stolbtsy area [there are] the remains of a motorcycle regiment of the 6th mechanized corps (suffered heavy losses in a battle with an airborne assault [enemy] with a strength of up to 300**

**people, supported by a powerful air raid). Delegates: 3rd rank military engineer S... [inaudible] and 3rd rank quartermaster Sidorov reported: 24.6 at 14.00 the 4th Panzer Division set out from Slonim for Baranovichi..." [ 430]**

So, no "girl" changed the date of the 27th to the 24th. Two groups of commanders, independently of each other, report that the 4th Panzer Division was between Slonim and Baranovichi on the afternoon of June 24 (this fact seems to have stunned the compiler of the report himself, who considered it necessary to specifically clarify: "the division the delegate saw personally). The second tank division of the 6th mechanized corps (7th TD) also turned out to be completely "out of place" - instead of advancing on Grodno, it turned out to be marching from Volkovysk to Baranovichi. The motorcycle regiment of the 6th MK by the end of the day on June 24 was at such a great distance from the battlefield near the Forge that in order to explain the reasons for the transformation of the regiment into "remnants", it was necessary to invent "an enemy airborne assault force of up to 300 people."

What was it? We will never find an exact answer. The most probable, explaining most of the revealed facts, seems to me the following version: on June 22, 1941, the war began. A couple of days later, the 4th Panzer Division, like the entire 6th Mechanized Corps as a whole, turned into a "volunteer formation." Each of his own free will did what he wanted; all centralized control was lost - despite fifty radios and other wires. The corps broke up into several unrelated groups. The first was the command and staff, who took refuge in the dense forest and turned off radio

communications. Another group without long hesitation rushed to the east and already on the evening of June 24 successfully ran to Novaya Mysha. But there were also those who, with desperate persistence, without proper coordination of actions, without communication and interaction with their own artillery and infantry, attacked

Germans at the Forge - it is no coincidence that in German documents there are records of 12 enemy tank attacks and two hundred wrecked tanks. Who was how many? Judging by how many tanks the Germans noticed on the battlefield, how many of their soldiers they lost, how long it took them to "grind" a huge mechanized corps, every fourth, if not every fifth or sixth, went into battle. Yes, it's a bad

version. Completely wrong. It does not fit into the picture of "unparalleled in the history of mass heroism." Does the protocol of interrogation in German captivity of the commander of the 4th TD fit in?

***"After he left his troops, he tried [to get] through Slonim, Baranovich to Smolensk, and from Smolensk to Moscow. He assumed that by the time he got to Smolensk, Moscow would fall, and he would be able to get to his family from there. When***

***asked to briefly illustrate the basic principles of the combat use of Russian tank forces, he asked for a sheet of paper and drew a schematic sketch ... His not too extensive explanations [left] the impression of a schematic and learned with some difficulty [lesson]. In good faith, with pride and a sense of satisfaction [of a student] at the exam in tactics, he leaned back at the end of the drafting ...***

***It is noteworthy that he willingly gives information about his division, the structure and formation of battle formations, even about the principles of the combat use of tank troops. It does not occur to him that, from our point of view, he thereby violates the most sacred duty of an officer. In our opinion, he lacks the national honor and sense of duty that we take for granted. This observation is not a single one, but a general, constantly occurring [phenomenon] during every interrogation of senior officers. [409]***

And here is another senior officer, also from the 4th Panzer

Division: ***"On the evening of June 29, 1941, a Russian was captured a colonel who said that he was a Bessarabier (born in Moldavia?) and that he joined us voluntarily because he did not agree with the Soviet idea. For this reason, he tore off his insignia. He testified that he was the head of artillery of the 4th TD of the 10th Army (probably the head of artillery of the 4th TD, Colonel Efim Ivanovich Tsvik. - M.S. ). The division's artillery consists of one howitzer regiment with 12 cm and 15 cm guns. His division fought back from Bialystok to Minsk. Since June 26, he had no more contact with the army command.***

***The division (i.e., the commanders of the German division), through an interpreter, prompted the Russian colonel to return to his unit and say that***

**resistance is pointless and that Russian prisoners are not shot. Without much thought, the Russian colonel agreed to this. Today, at about 5 am, he was sent to the sector of the 2nd BTL 25 MPP to the Russian troops. Two hours later, a large number of defectors were reported in this place. Whether this is connected with the activities of the colonel, it is not yet possible to say. When interrogated through an interpreter, this colonel also said that, in his opinion, the entire Russian army**

**would fall apart in 12 days.** To complete the picture, we will also cite that phrase from the Combat Report of the Headquarters of the 12th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht, which follows the forecast about the timing of the collapse of the Red Army: "Three Russian soldiers who went over to **our side in the early morning of 06.30. th Infantry Regiment** (the number is clearly incorrect. - **M.S. ) . For the last 5 days they have not received any food, and when they were supposed to attack the Germans, they refused to obey the order of their lieutenant**

Unfortunately, the protocols of interrogations of Major General Zybin, the commander of the 36th Cavalry Division, another formation that was part of the KMG of the Western Front, have not yet been introduced into scientific circulation. There were many interrogations: first in German captivity, where he ended up in July 1941, then during the investigation and trial, which in August 1946 sentenced the former general to death "for losing control of the division and anti-Soviet agitation in captivity." [432]

**Decoupling** In the above-mentioned report of the commander of the 11th mechanized corps, Major General Mostovenko, exactly two sentences were given to the combat operations of the 6th mechanized corps: **"The offensive of the 6th MK was not successful. 4th TD advanced to the Forge and began to retreat.** One more phrase can be added to these two phrases: **"33 TD, by order of the commander of the mobile group, Major General Boldin, was subordinate to the commander of 6 MK."** [414] After that, Mostovenko was left with the 29th Panzer Division, which had previously suffered heavy losses in the battle near Konyukha, and the 204th Motorized Division. With these forces, 11 MK successfully counterattacked the enemy - on the operational maps of the German General Staff for June 24–26, it is clearly visible how the front line south of Grodno first stops its movement, and then begins to "push through" to the north, to the suburbs of Grodno. For the sake of truth, it should still be noted that the enemy of

the two Soviet divisions was one infantry regiment of the 8th infantry regiment of the Wehrmacht. Events unfolded incomparably worse to the east of the Neman, where the enemy infantry continued its unstoppable advance. The operational report of the 8th AK of the Wehrmacht at 15-45 on June 25 states: **"The 8th Army**

**approaches Ostrino** (settlement beyond the river Kotra, 46 km east of Grodno. - **M.S. ) , and in parts 161 frontier units go to Radun** (settlement 85 km northeast of Grodno. - **M.S. . ) ... Plans for 26.06: units of 161 infantry divisions to reach Lida, 28 infantry divisions to reach the area south of Lida, the 8th division, depending on the situation, at the neighbor on the right (i.e., in the lane 20 AK, reflecting the main attack of Soviet tank formations. - M.S. ) either cover the right flank further, or go to the area southeast of Lida.** Thoughts were not long, and already late in the evening of June 25, a decision was made: **"Order for building No. 4.**

**The 9th Army turns south to prevent the withdrawal of enemy troops from the exit through the river. Neman to the north and northeast. To solve this problem, 8 AK goes on the defensive at the turn of the river. Neman, at the front from Grodno to Mosta. [412]**

The words "going on the defensive" meant in this case the offensive (march) of units of the 28th Infantry Division and the left flank of the 8th Infantry Division (it was decided to leave the 161st Infantry Division in the area of Lida and reassign it to the command of the 5th Army Corps) from the line of Ozero, Ostrino to the south with access to the right bank of the river. Neman in the Lunno strip, Bridges. The command of the Soviet 3rd Army timely assessed the intentions of the enemy and the impending threat of encirclement. The first response was to "relocate" the command itself. General Mostovenko in his report describes it this way:

**"Commander-3 subordinated to me the remnants (detachments) of the 85th and 56th rifle divisions ... From 25.6. I had no connection with the headquarters of the 3rd Army. Commander-3 left through Lunno to the east" [141].** Not only Mostovenko lost contact with General V. Kuznetsov, in the operational reports of the headquarters of the Western Front, the phrase begins to repeat monotonously: **"Data on the location and operation of units of the 3rd Army have not been received."**

Concluding the conversation about the operational art of the command of the 3rd Army, we present one more document. This is a report from the commander of the 209th motorized division (17th MK), Colonel Muravyov, to the front headquarters, signed on June 25 at 22.30. Two pages from a school notebook "in a box", covered in a sweeping large handwriting. Strictly speaking, the entire history of the defeat of the Western Front is exhaustively set out in this report, so we will give it in full, from the first to the last.

words:

**"To the commander of the troops of the Western Special Military District, General of the Army**

**Comrade Pavlov Donosh: 1. All control by the commander-3 has been lost. Hundreds of commanders contact me every day looking for Sharm-3, in**

**including the chief of staff of the Air Force of the 3rd Army and the head of the 3rd department** (military

counterintelligence. - **M.S.** ) on 25.6.41. **2. Exactly almost the same situation in the 4th SC** (the corps included the

56th, 85th and 27th rifle divisions. - **M.S.** ). **3. At the front of Radun, Volkovysk, the enemy does not show much activity, and the only question is the loss of control. A mass of command staff and privates are running, and none of them saw a living German** (this is not an exaggeration, because there were no German units east of the line of the Neman River, the Svisloch River, at that time, with the exception of reconnaissance groups. - **M. S.** ) , **but exclusively - "the German bombards, does not allow to live." In fact, the losses from the actions of the aviation of the ground forces during real military operations are extremely insignificant. As an example, the 209th MD during 22-25.6.41 is systematically subjected to air raids and has 7 killed and 12 wounded during these days. During these days, I detained up to 3,000 armed, healthy people** **4. On the front of Lida, Slonim, during 22-25.6, apart from the actions of aviation** [of the enemy], **I did not**

**establish anything else. I ask: Create detachments by sending responsible front commanders to certain areas, and now all this uncontrollable mass is sowing panic about non-existent uprisings in the towns, paratroopers and airborne assault forces, which is extremely harmful to suitable new units, [to] the population . These rumors, absolutely unbelievable, go deep into the borders of the Soviet Union. It is extremely difficult for the field troops to work on the return to the front of those**

**fleeing for no reason. [426]** The final line under the failed counter-offensive of KMG Boldin was summed up at 16-45 on June 25, when the following telegram was sent from the front headquarters: "**To the 3rd and 10th armies. Commander of the 6th mechanized corps. Break off the battle immediately and make a forced march, following night and day, concentrate on Slonim. Get in touch [by] radio with Golubev** (commander of the 10th Army) **and directly with me. At the beginning of the movement, on the morning of the 26th, and report the end of the march. Radio the state of fuel and ammunition. [433]** This order was an integral part of the decision on the general withdrawal of troops of the 3rd and 10th Armies from the "Bialystok ledge" to the line of Molodechno, Lida, r. Schara. A decision that could have been useful if it had been taken ten days before June 22. On the evening of June 25, it was too late to withdraw troops to the east, and there was practic

On the same evening of June 25 (only later, at 11:30 p.m.), the command of the 9th Wehrmacht Army decided to turn the 8th and 28th Infantry Divisions to the south, "in order to prevent the withdrawal of **enemy troops with an exit across the river. Neman to the north and northeast.** Infantry divisions of the 4th Wehrmacht Army by the evening of June 25 reached the southern bank of the river. Narew and in a number of places have already crossed it. Thus, for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, there was a narrow "bottleneck" 50-60 km wide, the axis of which was the highway Bialystok, Volkovysk, Slonim. The road was mercilessly bombed by German aircraft. Even in the operational reports and reports of the Wehrmacht headquarters, i.e., where, by definition, there is no place for emotions, such entries appear: "According to the **7th AK, the Bialystok-Volkovysk road, where it passes through the forest, is clogged with fragments of a defeated enemy. 139 guns (of which 60 are heavy), 150 tanks (of which 30 are super-heavy) were counted on a section of the road 14 km long. The picture of the destroyed manpower is worse than in Dunkirk ... According to the crews of the "pieces", the road looks terrible. The Russians have indescribable**

**losses ...** " The remnants of the 11th mechanized corps, together with the remnants attached to it (numbering no more than a battalion) of the 56th and 85th rifle divisions, held the defense along the left bank of the river for several days. Neman from Lunno to Mosta. Corps commander General Mostovenko writes in his report:

**"By the time of departure to the river. Svisloch parts of the corps consisted of the**

**following: 29 TD - no more than 350-400 people, 25 tanks and 15**

**armored vehicles. 33 TD - withdrew to the river. Russia consisting of 153 people without materiel.**

**204 MD - up to 2 incomplete battalions on foot, 5 tanks and 5 armored vehicles. ...**

**The greatest pressure of the enemy was at the crossings over the river. Neman and especially near m. Bridges. The enemy conducted continuous air raids and intense artillery and mortar fire. All his attacks were repulsed. For reasons unknown to me, the bridge near the Mosta metro station was not blown up. I didn't have explosives...**

**On June 28, at 18 o'clock, the enemy, having reinforced his units with infantry, tanks and artillery, went on the offensive, broke through the bridgehead defenses and approached the Mosty metro station. Mosty was captured several times and again fought back with a bayonet charge from our units and shotgun fire. The rifle battalion, which occupied the defense, partly retreated along the bridge, and partly crossed the river by swimming. Neman. The battle for Cape Bridges continued throughout the night, and the enemy was not allowed to cross to the southern bank ... On the night of June 28-29, 1941, an order was given to withdraw**



***The way out was made along the roads clogged with burnt and wrecked combat and transport vehicles, under artillery fire and bombing of aviation ... "[ 414]*** The 28th

Wehrmacht infantry division, indeed, was unable to cross the Neman near the Bridges until the evening of June 28, which is distinctly seen on German operational maps. This allowed the remnants of the two armies of the Western Front to withdraw to the east, through Volkovysk to the Zelvyanka and Shchara rivers. This point of the "road of death" was the last. The Slonim-Baranovich strip was already densely occupied by parts of the Guderian tank group, to the north of the motorway, the banks of Zelvyanka and Shchara were heavily swamped and practically impassable. Those who decided not to give up tried to break through either to the north, to Novogrudok (where they fell into the next, "Minsk boiler"), or to the southeast, through Slonim, Ruzhany, into the Pinsk swamps. In the report of the 4th Army of the Wehrmacht to the headquarters of the GA "Center" (dated 2-30 July 1) we read: ***"The enemy is trying to escape from the impassable terrain in the lower reaches of the Shchara to its right bank to Slonim. The use of 55-ton tanks and the offensive [infantry] in 8-12 rows (chains) one after another prove how much he***

***strives to break through Slonim along more passable roads to the southeast ... "[ 434]*** In these battles, the commander of the 6th of the mechanized corps, Major General Khatskelevich, chief of artillery of the corps, Major General Mitrofanov, commander of the 29th tank division (11 MK) Colonel Studnev, the chief of staff of the 6 MK, Colonel Koval, went missing, were captured (where they died) commander of the 6th Cavalry Corps Major General Nikitin, Deputy Commander of the 11th Mechanized Corps, Major General Makarov, and Chief of Artillery of the 11th MK, Major General Starostin. To this day, among the forests and swamps in the "triangle" of Zelva, Slonim, Ruz

## Chapter 3.5 Minsk

During the first three days of the war, formations of the 3rd Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht crossed the Neman and in a non-stop offensive reached the Vilnius-Voronovo line, while the advanced units of the 20th and 12th Panzer Divisions approached the Oshmyany-Golshany road by the end of the day on June 24. The units of the Red Army opposing them (the left flank of the 11th Army of the North-Western Front) were utterly defeated and randomly rolled back to the east (***“many stragglers and fled, detained in the direction of Dvinsk, many weapons were thrown; the 11th Army is not an organized combat-ready formation »***). The next proposal of the command of the 3rd TGr (on the implementation of the maximum deep coverage and encirclement of the grouping of Soviet troops along the Western Dvina and Dnieper rivers) was once again rejected, and the German tank divisions began to turn southeast, towards Minsk.

The command of the Western Front did not have a ready-made plan of action for such a situation, the plan for covering the Western OVO provided five options for "providing the main operational directions in case of a breakthrough through the army defense areas of the enemy's motorized mechanized units", but none of them envisaged a breakthrough of the enemy beyond the Vilnius line, Lida, and even at such a pace. The 11th mechanized corps, which in one of these options was supposed to ***“focus on the northern bank of the river. Neman in the Skidel area and the forests to the north and northeast, together with 11 SAD and 12 BAD, attack the enemy's motorized mechanized units that broke through in the general direction to Radun, Shalchininkai or Lida, Oshmyany ”, by the end of the day on June 24, had already suffered significant losses, and the rest*** in the formation of the units were involved in the actions of KMG Boldin (i.e., they tried to

advance in a completely different direction); the 11th air division mentioned above no longer existed. In the current crisis situation, the front command had two “tools”, two groups of troops: the 21st Rifle Corps, which even before the start of the war began advancing to the Lida area, and four rifle divisions (64, 100, 108, 161), concentrated (or by that time concentrating) in the deep rear of the front near Minsk. The fighting of these two "groups of troops" in reality unfolded quite independently of each other and represented two separate operations. Accordingly, it makes sense to describe these events separately.

## **21st Rifle Corps In**

accordance with pre-war plans, 21 SCs as part of the 17th and 37th Rifle Divisions, starting from the third day of mobilization, were to be transferred by rail from the area of permanent deployment (Vitebsk, Polotsk, Lepel) to the border the Neman river from Druskininkai to Lunno; The 24th Rifle Division, also from the third day of mobilization, was transferred to the same area by road and included directly in the 3rd Army. The emerging 20th mechanized corps was to advance to the Oshmyany region, the 8th anti-tank artillery brigade - to the region of the city of Lida. [435] Open mobilization in the USSR was

announced from June 23, however, covert deployment from June 13–18 was already in full swing, and by the end of the day on June 21, the position of the formations of the 2nd echelon of the front (as indicated in the ZhBD of the front) was as follows : The 8th PTABR was already in the area assigned to it, the 24th Rifle Division was on the march near Molodechno, the 37th Rifle Division was starting to unload from trains at the Shalchininkai station (45 km north of Lida), the 17th Rifle Division was on the march (on the evening of June 23rd it was in the area of Traba, Yuratishki, i.e., 40 km northeast of Lida). In addition, the 50th Rifle Division was marching to Molodechno from the Polotsk

region (it was not mentioned in any way in the plan of covering the ZapOVO). [436] By displaying this deployment on the map, we will see how, as a result of a purely random combination of circumstances, the formations of the 21st Corps ended up exactly where they could be brought into battle with the greatest impact (see Fig. 15). The strip of terrain from Vilnius to Minsk is a rather narrow (40–50 km) “corridor”, bounded from the north by an impenetrable swampy forest on the right bank of the Viliya River, and from the south by an equally roadless, indented by many small rivers, swampy forest ( Nalibokskaya Pushcha). From Vilnius to Minsk, “one and a half roads” were laid - a full-fledged highway with a hard surface (Smorgon, Molodechno, Radoshkovichi) and a very conditional “road direction” along the Golshany, Volozhin, Rakov line, composed of dirt roads of varying degrees of “improvement” (the hard surface was only on the Rakov

section, Minsk). Probably the best solution would be to take up defensive positions in the 35 km zone west of the Molodechno-Volozhin line; while the flanks of the defenders would be covered by the river Viliya and the swamps of the Nalibokskaya Pushcha, and in front of the front, the river could be used as a natural anti-tank obstacle. Berezina [142] with its marshy, muddy banks. Unfortunately, at the headquarters of the Western Front at that moment no one knew (and most likely could not have imagined) that the defense on

the adjacent flanks of the North-Western and Western fronts would collapse at such a speed, respectively, it never occurred to anyone to slow down the advance of 21 SC to the south-west; on the contrary, it was forced in every possible way, and by the morning of June 25, the divisions of the corps crossed the "road direction" Golshany, Rakov and went to the area northeast of Lida.

On the eve of June 24, the command of the Western Front decided to subordinate the troops concentrated on the northern bank of the Neman to the control of the 13th Army. The operational directive of the Military Council of the front, sent to the headquarters of the 13th Army at 14.25 on June 24, set the following tasks:

***"Combine the headquarters of the 21st Rifle Corps (corps headquarters on 23.6.41 - in Lida), the 8th anti-tank brigade, the 24th and 50th rifle divisions and all the units that will be in your area, including departing from the North-Western Front; put the latter in order and subordinate to yourself.***

***Your task: the 21st Rifle Corps of the 24th and 37th Rifle Divisions to occupy the front of Oshmyany, Art. Benyakone (12 km north of Voronovo. - M.S. ) and provide for themselves from the Vilnius direction; The 17th Infantry Division will advance in the general direction towards Radun and Orany in order to interact with the strike group of Boldin, which strikes from Bialystok on Lipsk, Grodno, and Merkin. Use the 8th PTABR to secure the Lida area from the west or northeast.***

***The 50th Infantry Division is at your disposal." [437]*** In

accordance with this directive, the commander of the 13th Army, Lieutenant General Filatov, issues Combat Order No. 01 on the same day; there, the tasks set by the front command were almost verbatim repeated (with the addition that the 50th rifle division was supposed to be reinforced by the 84th regiment of the NKVD troops and the remnants of the 5th tank division, which had reached Molodechno along with their commander). It is noteworthy that both in the order of the 13th Army and in the Combat Order No. 1 of the commander of the 21st SC dated 9.00 on June 25, the anti-tank brigade was supposed to be left in the area southwest of Lida ("8 PTBR firmly provide defense from the west and southwest in the direction of ***Lida along the eastern bank of the river Dzitva*** "). As a result, the brigade was at a distance of 70-100 km from the route of advance of the German tank divisions; such a decision, alas, testifies to a complete misunderstanding of the real situation, ignorance of the enemy's force grouping and his intentions. The next day, June 25, this

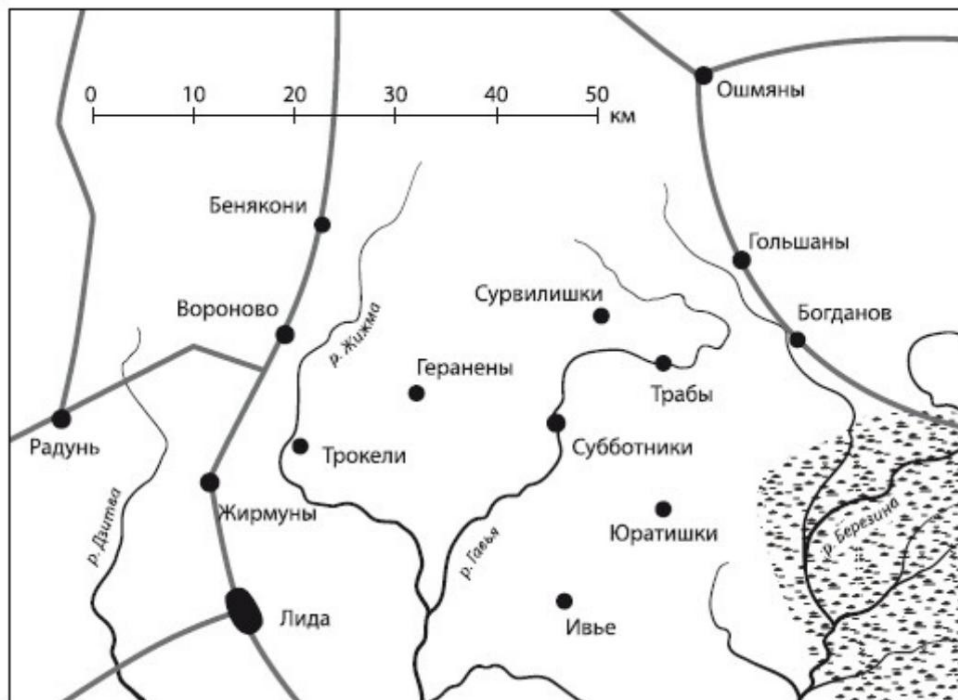
misunderstanding was confirmed in the most dramatic way. The headquarters of the 13th Army, which had already pretty much traveled around Western Belarus by that time, was in Molodechno and, in accordance with Combat Order No. 01, was supposed to

go to the area of m. Ivye. But he did not cross and until the evening of June 25 he was at the Gorodok metro station - exactly in the middle of the two roads leading to Minsk (17 km south of Molodechno), that is, between two streams of enemy motorized troops. The result is described in the report of Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, head of the operational department of the

headquarters of the 13th Army, as follows: ***“At 20.00 on 25.6.41, a group of tanks with motorized infantry attacked the headquarters of the 13th Army in the forest 4 km north of Gorodok, the reflection was carried out by posts from the communications battalion and command personnel . The tanks were shooting at cars and people at point-blank range, Lieutenant General [Filatov] gave the order to change the command post, which was supposed to be replaced in the Volozhin area, some cars rushed in different directions ... Lieutenant General Filatov, who was directly under fire and, according to contradictory testimonies, alive, left in an armored car or car with the chief of staff brigade commander Petrushevsky, giving the order to leave, but, p***

No, fate still left General Filatov 19 days of life [143], the surviving command staff (50 people were missing, the enemy seized the property of the headquarters, including cipher documents) managed to assemble in the suburbs of Minsk by the end of the day on June 26, and later the headquarters of the 13th Army led the fighting of the entire Minsk group of troops of the Western Front. However, 21 SC as a result was left without any leadership (it was never included in the 3rd Army, and the command of this Army on the evening of June 25 "dissolved in the forest"), and later without communication with the headquarters of the front.

The enemy (57th Panzer Corps) used the day of June 25 in the following way. Coming from the border itself in the vanguard of the corps, the 12th TD covered a distance of 80 km from Golshany to Rakov during the day. As can be judged from the ZhBD 57 TK, at the same time, the division avoided serious clashes with units of the 21st Rifle Corps crossing the route of its movement; in the entry dated June 25, only two phrases were given to the actions of the 12th TD: ***“The offensive of the 12th TD was especially slowed down*** (this is how the Germans described the forced march for 80 km in a day. - ***M.S. ) due to the destruction of bridges and exceptionally bad road conditions ... 12 TD entered the area north of Rakov. By evening, the division met here with a strong enemy, whom it could not overturn by dusk.*** [439] Thus, the 12th TD, with its Czech tanks (narrow tracks, 125 hp per 10 tons of weight), in four days from the beginning of the war, passed along very conditional “roads” 250 km from the border to the front edge of Minsk fortified area; there she had to enter into a fierce battle for many days and later be the first to enter Minsk.



Rice. 30. Area of combat operations of the 21st Rifle Corps

Two other divisions (19th TD, 18th MD) of the 57th Tank Corps, which crossed the Neman with a delay of 1-2 days (in relation to the chronology of the offensive of the 12th TD), "slip through" without a fight a roadless section from Voronovo to the river. Berezina did not have time. (Fig. 30.) The first clashes between the forward units of the German divisions and the 37th Infantry Division took place already on the evening of June 24th. In operational report No. 1 of the headquarters of the 21st UK, this episode is described quite self-critically:

***"The 37th Rifle Division, being attacked in the afternoon of 24.6 by an enemy airborne group with tanks (a description of the enemy's advanced motorized detachments typical for Soviet documents of the first days of the war. - M.S.) in the area of Cape Voronovo, as a result of 247 joint ventures from 170 ap, poorly managed, did not offer proper resistance to the enemy and retreated in disorder across the river. Zhizhma, where they went on the defensive [144]. On the morning of June 25, in the Olgovka-Rakovshchizna sector, preparing for the offensive, the 91st Rifle Regiment, suddenly attacked by an enemy airborne assault in the area of Cape Traby, was dispersed. 20th joint venture approached the Trokeli with its head at 5.00 25.6 without encountering the enemy. Shtativ in Lipnishki. Command and control of the troops during***

The reports and operational reports of the headquarters of the 21st UK, of course, note an acute shortage of ammunition, fuel and food. There is another source of information - operational reports No. 2 and 3 of the Lida air defense headquarters for June 23 and 24. This document has the value of being an unbiased

"view from the outside" - for the actions (and inaction) of the ground forces captain Sumarov, commander of the 229th anti-aircraft artillery division, not responsible for:

***“After the bombing of the city, all the administration, such as: the city council, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the city committee of the CPSU (b), directors of enterprises, the police and the NKVD abandoned their posts and fled. The city was left without any management, as well as the districts. Hostile elements began to take away military warehouses left by military units without any protection, and the population is also taking away everything from different supply bases ... Due to the fact that the fuel and lubricants warehouse and the main food warehouse remained intact in the city, one battery was put on guard at the named warehouses ... ”[ 444 ]***

Having thrown back without much effort the 37th Infantry Division from the line of the Zhizhma River, units of the 19th Wehrmacht TD in the afternoon of June 25 reached the Gavya River in the Traby, Subbotniki section; here at this place their “easy life” ended:

***“18.00. Under Traby,***

***the division unexpectedly encountered a strong enemy defense, which it could not overcome before the offensive.***

***darkness...***

***22-00 . By this time, the area near Radun, Zhirmuny was occupied by the 18th motorized division; The 19th***

***Panzer Division - the outskirts of Cape Traby, most of the Survilishki, Traby strip. The opposing enemy succeeded, thanks to skillfully carried out close battles and numerous blowing up of roads and bridges, to stop the division, so that the task of the day - to take the heights near Rakov - was not even approximately achieved ... 22 - 30. Based on the results of ground and air***

***reconnaissance, it follows that in a large forest in the massif south and southeast of the general line of Survilishki - Traby - Rakov there are large enemy forces ... Even during the night, the enemy carries out numerous attacks on the front of 19 TD, which she was able to successfully repel with heavy losses for the enemy. The enemy managed to find a gap in the battle formations of the corps south-west of Surviliški in the forest, break through, attack the convoy of reserves going to replenish the troops, and also set fire to the wooden bridge, which was of great importance for the transfer of supplies and reinforcements ... ”[439] This turned out to be for the Germans, the first meeting with the 24th Samara-Ulyanovsk twice Red Banner Iron***

Division; it was the oldest and one of the most famous rifle divisions of the Red Army, a participant in all military campaigns, including the Polish (1920) and Finnish (1939/40) wars. After the end of the Finnish war, on the basis of units of the 24th Rifle Division,

the 8th separate rifle brigade was formed, which was deployed on the Finnish peninsula of Hanko (big things awaited the brigade: to ensure the landing of 1-2 rifle divisions on Hanko and a joint march to Helsinki with them from the west); after the formation of the 8th osb, the Iron Division was actually recreated anew, but the combat traditions laid down by its first commander, the legendary Guy [145], remained.

As of June 1, the 24th Rifle Division had 10,390 men, 415 vehicles, a supernumerary number of 45 mm anti-tank guns (65 instead of 54) and 76 mm guns (46 instead of 34), 4 anti-aircraft guns of 76 mm caliber. And what is remarkable - in contrast to what was reported by the neighbors in the corps (17th and 37th rifle divisions), ammunition did not disappear in the Iron Division either after the first or after subsequent battles. By the time they entered the battle near Cape Traba, the division also had its own tank group: at the Yuratishki station, 8 "orphan" heavy KV tanks were found and unloaded from the echelon, from 10 to 15 T-34 tanks were attached to the division from troops retreating to the east (probably, these were the remnants of the 5th Panzer Division of the NWF, defeated at Alytus), 15 T-37/38 tankettes in the division were "their own", a dozen T-26 light tanks

were collected from the retreating. There are practically no primary operational documents from the 24th Rifle Division (the division's archival fund exists, but it traditionally contains several "empty" pages), not much more remains from the 21st Rifle Corps as a whole (a school notebook has been preserved in the archive fund of the Western Front "in a box" with a report on the hostilities of the 21st SC, signed by the deputy chief of staff of the corps, Lieutenant Colonel Regblat). The combat report of the headquarters of the 21st SC dated 9-45 June 26 reports that in the battle on June 25 **"about 50 tanks and 14 aircraft"** of the enemy were destroyed. [440] There is also a phrase there that is quite consonant with the entry in the ZhBD of the German 57th Panzer Corps: **"According to the testimony of the prisoner, the [19th] Panzer Division had the task of reaching Minsk on June 25, but was stopped in the indicated area for lack of fuel, which expected to top up today"**; as a result of the breakthrough

of parts of the 24th Rifle Division and the defeat of the transport column, the Germans failed to replenish supplies. Unfortunately, the actions of the 24th Rifle Division were very weakly supported by other formations of the 21st Corps. The 8th anti-tank artillery brigade (5147 personnel, 36 85-mm guns and 18 107-mm guns) stubbornly continued to "hold the defense" along the river. Dzitva, north and south of the highway Skidel, Lida; not a single German tank appeared there (and could not appear). The 17th Rifle Division "defended" the approaches to the city of Lida in the same way, but after the units of the 161st Infantry Division (the division



The 17th Rifle Division retreated, and ***"it was known from one of the commanders of the artillery brigade that the 17th Rifle Division had begun to withdraw southward on the morning of 27.6, having crossed and swum across the river. Neman "*** ; it is not difficult to guess how much materiel was thrown at the same time "wade and swim"

Even in such a situation, fighting with open flanks, the 24th Rifle Division and the units of the 37th Rifle Division, which retained their combat capability, were able to create very serious problems for the Germans - two divisions (19th TD and 18th MD) were for a long time connected by battle, in the future ( the order was given on the morning of June 28) the 14th MD had to join them. The combat log 57 of the Wehrmacht TC describes these battles in terms that are almost impossible to find in other documents of June 41: ***"June 26. 1.00. During the night, the enemy is firing artillery***

***in the forest area to the southeast and around Survilishki, and since early morning has been intensively shelling the bridge across the river. Kleva at Survishilka, located in front of 19 td. 7.00. The enemy launches a counterattack against units of the 19th TD located on the heights southwest of Survilishki. The ensuing battle involved the headquarters of the corps, which was about to move to the command post in the forest north of Surviliški... The enemy managed to advance one and a half kilometers to the bridge located south of Surviliški...***

***14.00. During the first half of the day, the situation at the bridge was already partially critical, everything around the bridge and further behind the corps command post in the forest north of Survilishki was under heavy artillery fire. For this reason, the***

***checkpoint was moved to the rear by about 3 km. The attack begins on the 19th. The division fails to take the heights due to very tenacious and skillfully directed resistance. Losses in tanks are significant ... 19 TD as a result, it is not possible to move east. She receives multiple orders from the corps to create a defensive line to the west of Subotniki, Survilishki, Traba and prevent the enemy from breaking through ...***

***22.00. 18 md during the day on its defense line of Zhirmuny-Geraneni repulsed numerous enemy attacks, holding this line until dusk ... The enemy in large forest areas south and southeast of the Survilishki, Traby, Bogdanov line probably received significant reinforcements from the retreating here from the west forces. 27th of June. Evening. 18 md, which in the***

***morning received an oral order from the commander of the 3rd TGr to relocate to the Vilna, Oshmyany line, was again reassigned (i.e., left at the battlefield near Geraneny, Traba. - M.S. ) 57 TK ... In front of the front 19 TD, the enemy is constantly strengthens... It's obvious that***

***the enemy exerts particularly massive pressure on the 19th TD, which is in a difficult position due to the stretched front, but its positions are held, despite significant losses. The commander of the TGr is definitely aware that the position of the 19th TD is not easy and holding its position is critical to the successful completion of this operation.***

***June***

***28th. 4.00. Following another quiet night, active hostilities [resumed] early in the morning. The enemy fires with 2-3 batteries (among them medium caliber) at everything that moves. It should be noted that the enemy is conducting excellent surveillance, which allows him to view our rear ...***

***In front of the 19th TD front, an attempt to break through the enemy at Cape Traby was repelled with heavy losses for the enemy. According to the division, the enemy was trying to break through Traby in a northerly direction in dense, deeply echeloned columns.***

***16.00. Ground reconnaissance of 18 MD found that the territory in front of it on the section of the river. Zhizhma and Gavya (10 km northwest of Ilye) are free from the enemy (this means that the 37th Rifle Division has completely crumbled. - M.S. ) . The division proposes to occupy this sector today. The corps command approves this decision and makes the division responsible for the complete security of the open adjacent flanks between it and the 19th TD, which will not be able to move forward, since its forces are needed to repel the ongoing enemy counterattacks ...***

***The enemy used heavy tanks (apparently 55 tons) against 19 TDs. The intensified shelling of the enemy allows us to conclude that the Russians intend to make a strong attempt to break through to the north during the evening.***

***19.00. In a telephone conversation, the corps commander emphasized that, unfortunately, the command did not have additional forces at its disposal to strengthen the defense of the Survilishki, Traby sector ... The divisions were recommended to use large-caliber guns [146] to fight Russian heavy tanks on the very front line ...***

***Today it should be noted that the 19th TD, which was supposed to keep an unusually stretched front line from breaking through the enemy, despite its limited infantry resources, successfully repelled all enemy attacks. Although its losses from sometimes very strong enemy artillery fire were by no means small, all parts of the division performed their tasks in an exemplary manner. [439]***

And that is not all. In the ZhBD of the 3rd TGr, in the entry dated June 28, there are the following words: ***“Report of the 57th TK that the Russians launched a counterattack on the morning of June 28 with large forces. The battle against a large mass of Russians made our soldiers think about the future. The Russians used their heaviest tanks (4 pieces), which cannot be destroyed by our 50 mm anti-tank guns. [353]*** Four pieces. There were 114 KV tanks in the 6th mechanized corps. And only if you really try hard, you can find a couple of vague references to them in the ZhBD of the 20th

Wehrmacht Army Corps ... On the evening of June 28, it was decided to withdraw. In the War Log of the ZF we read: ***“28.6. The corps commander made a decision and issued an order to withdraw the divisions from the battle in order to preserve manpower and materiel and, under the guise of a strong rearguard, retreat to the line of the former state border. [469]*** Apparently, the Germans “thought about the future” so much (and the rearguards of the 21st SC turned out to be persistent) that the 19th

Wehrmacht TD did not dare to go on the offensive until the evening of June 29: “June 29 . ***The night passed quietly, the enemy, contrary to expectations, did not launch new attacks in the morning. The 19th TD reports that the enemy in front of him went to the southeast ... The application for air support of the 19th TD by the forces of the 8th Air Corps was therefore rejected. Shortly after sending this message to the TGr, it turned out, however, that the enemy did not retreat, but only retreated less than*** 14.00. ***The 19th TD, as before, has a strong enemy in front of it (including heavy tanks) and believes that large-scale attacks will resume in the evening.***

***19.30. The day passed on the whole calmly, in the area of 19 TD, artillery fire was carried out from both sides. The enemy held positions in front of this division, as before, with full force. There was no re-deployment of the***

***enemy...” [439]*** The 24th Infantry Division retreated to Nalibokskaya Pushcha with less than 2,000 men in service. Such was the price of five days of fighting. But the result was also considerable: three divisions of the 3rd TGr were withdrawn from the battle for Minsk, the fourth (20th MD) remained in the Vilnius, Oshmyany zone, covering the rear of the strike force from a hypothetical strike from the northeast direction. In reality, this precaution turned out to be unnecessary - there was no one to hit. The 50th Rifle Division, left without any leadership from the headquarters of the 13th Army, at first gathered for a long time with forces for a counterattack on Smorgon, then, after the first

meeting with the enemy, rolled back to Pleschenitsa (90 km east of Smorgon), but did not linger there for a long time - Operational report No. 14 of the headquarters of the Western Front ( by **20.00** on July 1) briefly states: ***The city was attacked in the Pleschenitsa area by up to 120 enemy tanks*** (there were no tanks there on July 1. - **M.S.** ) ***and in the Logoisk area by up to 100 tanks, after which the division began to withdraw beyond the river. Berezina...*** [441]

### **Hot sky** The

battle for Minsk began on the morning of June 24, and it began in the air. For the first two days, the Luftwaffe grouping in the Center GA zone was busy with the most urgent and urgent business - gaining air superiority through massive strikes on Soviet Air Force airfields. On the third day, the Germans were able to afford to allocate significant forces to attack the main administrative and transport center of Belarus. Theoretically, Minsk was very reliably protected from air

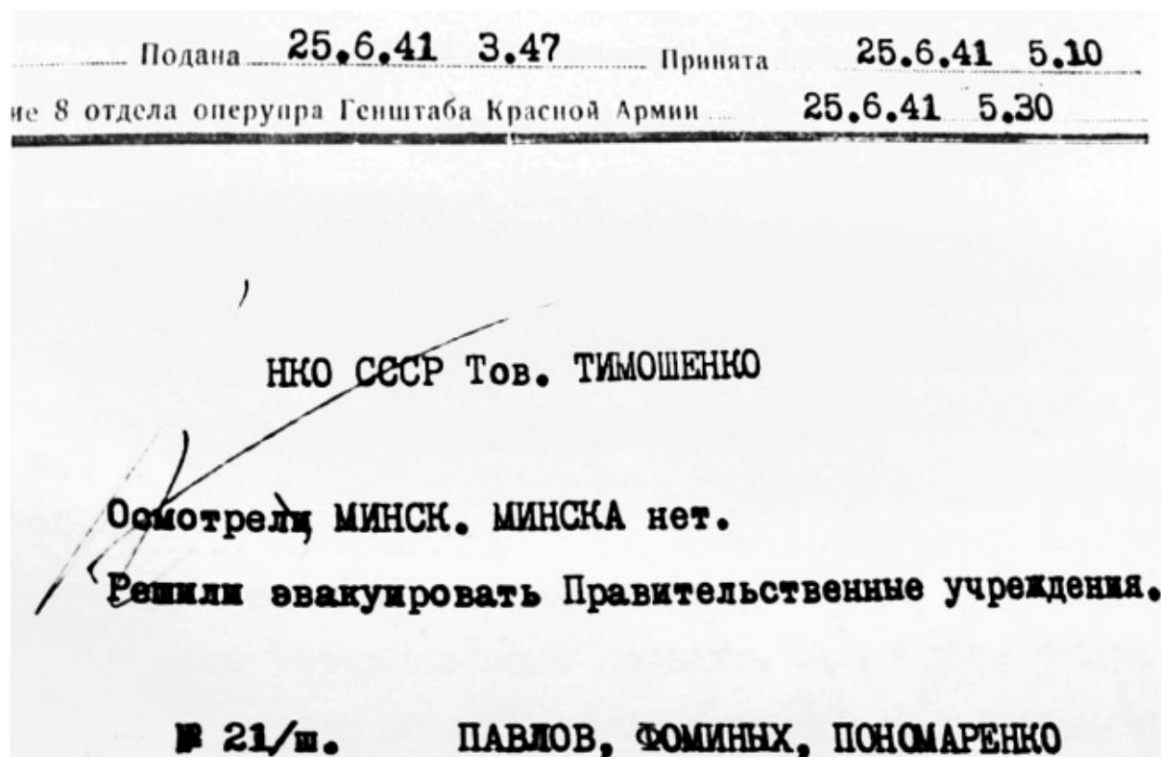
attack - the so-called headquarters was located in the city. "Western Air Defense Zone", based parts of the 7th Air Defense Brigade, including such a newest "curiosity" as the RUS-1 radar station as part of the 64th separate VNOS radio company. Of course, Soviet historians "like twice two" explained why all this did not help: the shells ran out (apparently, by the time of the first enemy air raids), anti-aircraft guns were (all?) At the training ground east of Minsk, in the settlement. Krupka (and there was no way to move 100 km across one's own territory in two days), besides, ***"the batteries of the 188th ZAP had just been re-equipped the day before with 85-mm anti-aircraft guns from POISO-3*** (the latest modification of the device for semi-automatic control of anti-aircraft fire. - **M.S.** ) ***and did not have time to properly master the new technique,*** " the old technique, of course, was hopelessly outdated, etc. [445]

Three air regiments of the 43rd Fighter Aviation Division were supposed to protect Minsk (based on the airfields of Loshchitsa and Slep'yanka in the suburbs of Minsk and at the airfield in Pukhovichi, 60 km southeast of Minsk); By the beginning of the war, they had 60 I-153s and 115 I-16s (moreover, the latest modifications with powerful 1000-horsepower engines), and on the first day of the war they did not lose a single aircraft on the ground. The division, judging by the Combat Report of the Headquarters of the 43rd IAD by 20:00 on June 25, was very active - in three days (June 23, 24, 25) 795 sorties were made and 53 enemy aircraft were reported shot down. [446]

There is no doubt that behind these figures there are quite real losses of the Luftwaffe. In particular, it was in the area of Minsk and its northwestern suburbs on June 24 that a very remarkable event for the first weeks of the war took place: seven Ju 87 dive bombers from the 8th Luftwaffe air corps were shot down within one day (two more "lappeters" were shot down on 24 June in the area of the city of Volkovysk, which may be associated with the actions of the 162nd IAP of the same 43rd IAD). Nevertheless, German aviation fulfilled its main task - to disorganize the work of the central command and control services of the Western Front - and more than fulfilled it.

***"In the air, the complete dominance of enemy aviation, the city of Minsk was subjected to repeated bombing during the day by waves of 8 to 50 aircraft. There are big fires and destruction in the city. The buildings of the headquarters of the front and the headquarters of the Air Force were badly damaged by direct hits of air bombs. [447]*** This is how the consequences of a massive Luftwaffe strike on the capital of Belarus are described in the evening Operative report of the headquarters of the Western Front of June 24. In the memoirs of eyewitnesses, this event was captured by the apocalyptic

***"Scattered like feathers are the stones with which the streets were lined ... At the intersection of Sovetskaya and Uritskogo streets, overturned tram cars lay, turning into a mass grave of people of all ages ... The entire center of Minsk was destroyed. Already by noon, the water supply and electricity were out of order. While there was water, firefighters tried to fight the fire. But the blazing bonfire, into which the enemies had turned the city, flared up more and more... The glow from the Minsk fires could be seen at a distance of 10 kilometers from the city..." [448]***



Rice. 31. Telegram from the command of the Western Front to the People's

Commissar of Defense of the USSR The command of the Western Front, as befits military men, reported briefly and clearly. At dawn (at 03:47) on June 25, a telegram was sent to Moscow, People's Commissar for Defense Tymoshenko, with the following content: ***"We examined Minsk. Minsk is not. We decided to evacuate government offices. Pavlov, Fominykh, Ponomarenko. [449]*** (Fig. 31.) The evacuation immediately led to the loss of communications and control of the troops. In the Military Operations Journal of the Western Front we read: ***"June 25. Almost throughout the day, there was no data on the situation at the front at the headquarters of the Polar Front ... Late in the evening, information was received at the headquarters of the front (through delegates and civilians) that Radoshkovichi was occupied by enemy tanks ... June 26. At about 0400, the front headquarters received information about the breakthrough of enemy tanks in the direction of Zaslavl, Minsk (the source of the data could not be established). The front command issued an order to move the command post to the Bobruisk area ... According to the new order, the front headquarters moved to the Mogilev area (175 km east of Minsk. - M.S. ). During June 26 and on the night of June 27, the headquarters was on the move towards Mogilev and assembled in the area of the new command post. There wa***

From a close distance, the picture of the "evacuation of Minsk" was even more sad [147]. Combat log of the 2nd Rifle Corps

describes it this way: ***“Endless streams of cars and people went east, blocking the paths and hindering the movement of troops. The city of Minsk, set on fire in many places, burned, abandoned by the inhabitants to their will. The fire brigade did not fight the fires, and fire trucks also went east. The authorities and the police left the city. The headquarters of the ZapOVO, leaving the city, did not organize either a commandant's service or the evacuation of military and valuable property. [451]***

"Endless streams" interfered not only by blocking the paths of movement of troops. ***“I report that along the Dzerzhinsky road, stragglers, those who fled the bombardments and simply those who fled, fighters and commanders, mainly of the headquarters economic service from the units of the 85th rifle division, are moving in streams, who, with their appearance (barefoot, without caps, loose) sow panic and demobilization ... » [452]***

The Soviet bomber aviation was by no means inactive in those days. Yes, the first echelon of the Air Force of the front (9th, 10th and 11th air divisions) had already melted away almost completely by that time (only separate, stubbornly fighting crews, units, squadrons remained), but the second echelon (12th and 13th -I BAD, 3rd air corps DBA) was still quite combat-ready. The 13th air division persistently bombed Guderian's tank columns in the Brest-Baranovichi zone, and the tank divisions of the 3rd Wehrmacht Tank Group bombarded the crews of the 3rd DBAK with bombs. Judging by the report of the headquarters of the air corps, by the morning of June 24, 137 DB-3f bombers were listed as combat-ready in parts of the 3rd DBAK. **[453]** On this day, the crews of the air corps carried out 170 sorties, bombing attacks were carried out on the Vilnius airfield (already inhabited by German air units by that time), the accumulation of enemy troops in the Grodno region.

On June 26, People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Marshal Timoshenko signed the Headquarters Directive, in which long-range aviation formations were tasked with ***“systematic continuous raids, day and night, to destroy enemy tanks ... bombard from a height of 400 meters, not in small groups, but in regiments.”*** The logic of the High Command is not difficult to understand: in previous days, Moscow received dozens of reports that the counterattacks of the mechanized corps of the Red Army were thwarted by enemy air raids, which “chased every vehicle”, “disabled up to 60-70% of the tanks”, “smashed all the rear tank divisions, etc. Now the Headquarters hoped that at the cost of losing a precious and scarce resource (aircraft and crews of long-range aviation), it would be possible, if not to defeat the enemy's motorized columns, then at least to slow down their relentless advance to the east.

Two days later, the commander of the 3rd DBAC, Major General Skripko, reported to the

headquarters of the Front Air Force: ***“On June 26, all DB-3 regiments carried out tasks throughout the day, destroyed enemy tank units in the area of Molodechno, Vilna, Oshmyany, Krevo, preventing their advance southeast of the line Rakov, Radoshkovichi. 254 DB-3 sorties were made (battle of tanks with DB-3). They bombed from low altitudes, using the dive method, and, in addition, machine-gun fire on motorized columns ... There are 28.6 serviceable 80, defective 17 aircraft. [454]***

254 sorties carried out in one day by about a hundred aircraft. Not a single formation of Soviet bomber aviation has yet fought with such tension. It was on that day, June 26, when attacking a German tank column near the village of Radoshkovichi, the crews of captains Nikolai Gastello and Alexander Maslov were killed [148]. This time, the enemy noticed the actions of Soviet aviation. In the report of the 78th Artillery Regiment of the 7th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht, we read: ***“On June 26, starting at 8 am, active enemy aircraft operations were noted, which intensified to such an extent that it could be called Russian dominance in the air. During the air raids on June 26, 1941, the regiment had the following losses: 4 killed, 20 wounded ... Due to the bridge near Radoshkovichi damaged by aircraft (the city stands at the confluence of two small rivers. - M.S. ), the division cannot leave before 10 o'clock ”. [455]*** The reported casualty figures (24

men) are not so great in absolute terms, but they account for almost two-thirds of the casualties of the 78th Artillery Regiment in the first nine days of the war (39 men). With regard to an artillery (in this case, a howitzer) regiment, such proportions of losses are not too surprising - howitzers do not have to stand at the front edge, and their losses from the impact of enemy aircraft can be relatively large. But here is another military unit, the 6th motorized infantry regiment of the same 7th tank division; in the first 9 days of the war, the regiment lost only 107 people, but at the same time, only one of the two battalions of the regiment lost 44 people on June 26 from a Soviet air raid (12 killed, 32 wounded). The combat report of the motorcycle battalion of the 7th TD says: ***“As a result of an enemy air raid, the battalion suffered heavy losses in personnel, vehicles and equipment”***; specific numbers of losses from the air strike are not given, but on June 26 the battalion lost 44 people killed and wounded, which is more than half of the losses in nine days. [455]

In general, for the entire 7 TD of the Wehrmacht, the day of June 26 became the day of unusually large (by the standards of the Wehrmacht - even "record") losses: 193 people (57 killed, 5 missing, 131 wounded). On other days of loss 7-



th tank were much smaller: on June 25, 32 people were lost, on June 27 - 48, and in the following days of June, losses become completely isolated (here it is also important to note that in these figures obtained by summing up the reports of units, there are no data on the second motorized infantry regiment of the division (7 MPP), in addition, the data of primary combat reports themselves are usually not quite accurate and complete). These statistics can be interpreted in different ways. The following assessment seems to me the most adequate: the losses of the 7th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht in battles with tanks (the bridge near Alytus) and infantry (the battle for Minsk) were so low that, against this background, they were even very modest (in comparison with the number of sorties spent and bombs) losses from the impact of Soviet aviation turned out to be quite tangible for the Germans.

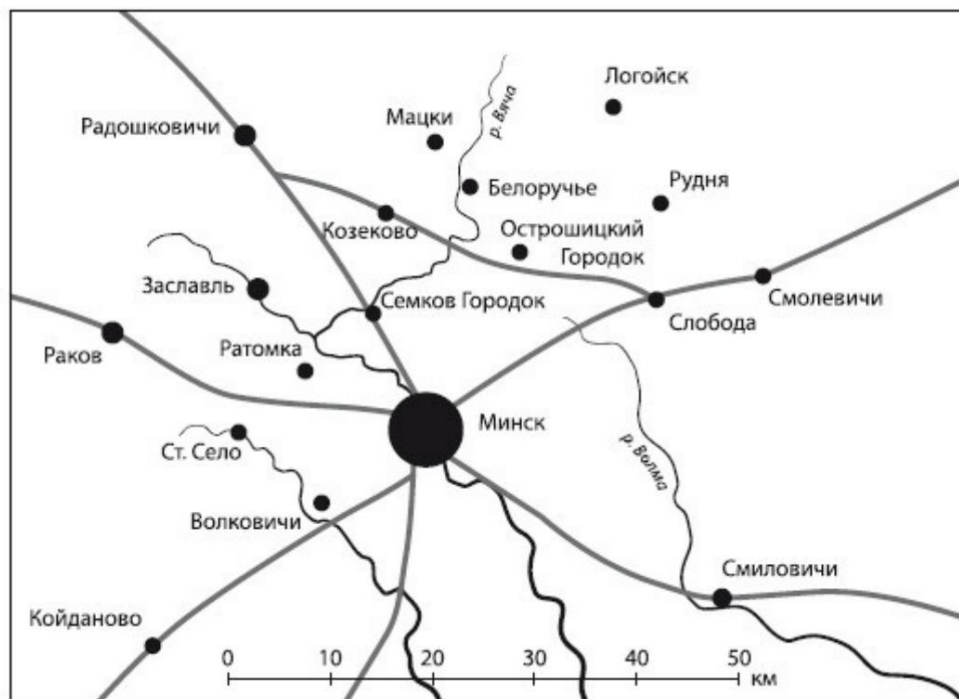
### **Fighting in the Minsk fortified**

**area** Air strikes somewhat slowed down and complicated the advance of German tank columns to Minsk, but only ground troops could inflict a decisive defeat on them, and there were already very few of them left in the Western Front. The hopes of the front command that the divisions surrounded to the west of the Shchara River would be able to go east in any combat-ready condition turned out to be ultimately futile. On the contrary, the enemy troops "paid" for the rapid defeat of the first echelon of the Western Front with minimal losses (on average, by June 25–26, they did not exceed the mark of 200–250 people per division) and at the time of reaching Minsk, they practically retained the original composition of forces and means. At this stage of the campaign, the main problem of the tank formations of the GA "Center" was the increasing number of military and transport equipment every day and hour, stuck on broken dirt roads (***"extremely poor conditions for transportation, single-track, sandy roads in hilly terrain, on which oncoming traffic simply impossible; heavy vehicles sometimes reach their destination in a day*** ). [353]

The combat operations of the second echelon of the troops of the Polar Front were generally more successful: in the area of Slonim, Baranovichi, the forced march of the 47th tank corps of the Wehrmacht was stopped by the stubborn defense of the 155th, 121st and 143rd rifle divisions, as a result of which the simultaneous closing " tank wedges "in the Minsk region, the Germans did not succeed; this had its consequences, which will be discussed later. The counterattack of the 21st Rifle Corps on the flank of the 3rd Tank Group led to the fact that three Wehrmacht divisions (19th Panzer, 18th and 14th Motorized) until June 29 were chained to the area of Lida, Traby, Volozhin.

Thus, on the morning of June 26, only three tank divisions (7th, 20th and 12th) were able to reach the line of the Minsk fortified area (Rakov, Radoshkovichi, Logoisk). It is essential that the Germans did not have a single infantry (motorized) division in front of Minsk, heavy artillery was hopelessly behind, and "according to science" 15 motorized infantry battalions consisting of three tank divisions were too few to break through the fortified area at the front tens of kilometers. Minsk UR was one

of the largest in the so-called. "Stalin's lines" - a system of fortified areas near the "old" Soviet-Polish border, which then passed through Radoshkovichi, Rakov. (Fig. 32.) By the beginning of 1936, 242 machine gun bunkers and 26 artillery bunkers had been built in the Minsk fortified area. In 1938, construction work resumed, and 10 more bunkers with artillery weapons appeared as part of the UR [149]. As for the technical level, then, of course, all these structures were inferior to the bunkers of the "Molotov line" at the new border, but it would be unfair to call them primitive "concrete sheds" similar to the bunkers of the first stage of the "Mannerheim line": 1.5 m of high-strength reinforced concrete, armored shutters on embrasures, filter-ventilation installations, anti-fragmentation sheathing of internal walls with metal sheets, heating, lighting, etc.



Rice. 32. Battle for Minsk

The main disadvantage of the Minsk UR for the situation that developed in June 1941 was the small number of bunkers with artillery weapons; no matter how light and weak the Czech tanks that were in service with the 3rd TGr of the Wehrmacht were, it was impossible to break through their armor with machine-gun fire. None of the three anti-tank artillery brigades that were part of the troops of the Western Front turned out to be in the right place at the right time: the 6th disappeared without a trace in the forests near Bialystok, the 8th stubbornly "defended" Lida from non-existent tanks, the 7th the march from the Ruzhanystok region (28 km west of Grodno) to the east "dispersed along different roads", but never concentrated (only a few gun crews came out to Minsk). [456] The 188th

anti-aircraft artillery regiment mentioned above, armed with 85-mm cannons, could be extremely useful; guns of such power easily pierced the armor of the "Czech" at a kilometer range, and for firing at tanks the sophisticated PUZO-3 device can not be mastered. Alas, a different decision was made: ***"The general situation on the Minsk sector of the front was unfavorable, and on June 26, by order of the commander of the Western Air Defense Zone, units of the 7th Separate Air Defense Brigade, covering Minsk, began to retreat to Borisov."*** [445] The situation was evolving. Of course ... In the

end, three headquarters and "three and a half" divisions remained for the defense of Minsk. The headquarters of the 2nd and 44th rifle corps and the headquarters of the emerging 13th Army, which appeared almost by accident in the evening of June 26 in the western suburbs of Minsk; The 64th and 108th Rifle Divisions of the 44th Rifle Division, the 100th Rifle Division of the 2nd Rifle Division. There was also the 161st Rifle Division, but its capabilities were very modest: before the war, the division was 3,000 strong (the so-called "triple deployment division"), and only a few days before June 22 it was staffed by wartime staff. All these formations (with the exception of the 100th Rifle Division) ended up in the Minsk region as a result of the redeployment of the "deep formations" of the Western OVO, which began in mid-June, and, as the former commander of the 64th Rifle Division, Major General Iovlev, writes in his famous memoirs, ***"the station We were not informed of the appointment, only the military communications authorities knew about it"***; the headquarters of the 2nd SC by the time the war began was "on exercises in the Bialystok region",

from where it urgently returned to Minsk. The final mobilization of the corps units was to take place in Minsk, but "the situation developed in such a way" that the line of reservists did not line up. The head of the political propaganda department of the 2nd Investigative Committee, Brigadier Commissar Miftakh

***“By 24.00 on June 24, conscripts appeared in the unit: the 151st corps artillery regiment - 86 appeared, 750 should appear, the 86th anti-aircraft division - 85 out of 340, the 10th communications battalion - 45 out of 240, the 5th engineer battalion - 210 out of 410. Four hospitals, the formation of which is entrusted to the headquarters of the 2nd Investigative Committee, were from 6 to 27% of the ascribed. A weak turnout of assigned staff takes place even from the RVC of Minsk. The situation is even worse with the delivery of assigned vehicles. In the 151st CAP, out of 204 vehicles assigned to the regiment, only 10 arrived, in the 5th OSB - out of 24 vehicles, not a single one was received ...” [ 458 ] 70% ... by the end of the day on June 25, in the division, mainly in the rear units, the shortage in personnel reached 3000 people, the division also did not***

***receive 40% of the vehicles assigned to it. [461]*** The non-appearance of reservists was not yet the biggest misfortune - the formations of the 2nd and 44th rifle corps were continuously replenished with people from a source not provided for by any Charters. In the political report of the 2nd Investigative Committee of June 24, we read: ***“On the roads leading to Minsk, the movement of fighters, junior commanders and command personnel, walking and driving in cars, in search of their units, has intensified. When these people are detained, it turns out that these people are in disarray, panicky, running away from the hostilities ... The commander decided to delay the***

***movement of these military personnel and form military units and units out of them . [459]*** It was much more difficult to solve the problem of supplying wandering troops with ammunition. On June 28, the commander of the 13th Army reported to the front headquarters: ***“People and even units are moving along the army sector in a continuous stream. The 108th Rifle Division of the 301st Howitzer Artillery Regiment was stopped and brought into combat order with a limited number of shells. The 518th anti-aircraft artillery regiment passed, which has a new materiel, but not a single shell. [460]*** And this, we note, despite the fact that directly in the western districts

it was concentrated: an average of 1109 shots for one 76-mm anti-aircraft gun, 143 shots for new 85-mm anti-aircraft guns. In the morning of June 25, the divisions of the 2nd and 44th rifle corps occupied the defense lines assigned to them. Unfortunately, the already small forces were not used in the best way - the task set (the defense of the Minsk fortified area) was understood literally, and two rifle divisions of the 44th SC were evenly stretched “in a thread” 80 km long, repeating the outlines of the UR; a tactic perhaps appro

the most threatened direction (roads Rakov - Minsk and Radoshkovichi - Minsk) turned out to be only two (30th and 159th) regiments of the 64th rifle division, and even there the concentration of efforts on road directions is not visible (neither in operational reports, nor in diagrams attached to the memoirs of the commander of the 64th division); the third regiment of the division (288th joint venture) was stretched for 15 km in a forest area west of the Vyacha River (north of the Kozekovo, Sloboda road), that is, it was largely withdrawn from active operations. The

second division of the 44th SC (108th Rifle Division) was deployed to the south, on the 30-km section of Staroe Selo, Koydanovo [150], Stankovo (settlement 8 km southeast of Koydanovo), again, without the necessary concentration of forces near the highway Koydanovo - Minsk; in the future, this led to the fact that the blow of the 17th German Panzer Division fell on one (444th joint venture) of the regiments of the division with the inaction (directly recorded in the documents) of other units. We have to admit that the fact known today even to an inquisitive schoolboy - German mechanized formations advanced strictly along the roads, without risking (and not considering it necessary) to go deep into forests and swamps - at that time was not yet realized by the commanders of the Red Army.

The most combat-ready formation, the Order of Lenin, the 100th Rifle Division (participant in the "liberation campaigns" in Poland, Finland and Romania), took up defense south of the Kozekovo, Sloboda road, covering the northern suburbs of Minsk in a semicircle, with the front to the west, north and east; it is not entirely clear what kind of enemy and from where the Soviet command expected to see it. The most bizarre was the operational formation of the 161st Rifle Division (also included in the 2nd SC) - one rifle regiment of the division (603rd Rifle Regiment), reinforced by two battalions of the 542nd Regiment, took up defense near the settlement. Ostroshitsky Gorodok (i.e., in the zone of the 100th division), the rest of the division remained in the eastern suburbs of Minsk.

Ultimately, the blow of three (!) Wehrmacht tank divisions fell on the front of two rifle regiments of the 64th rifle division and on the flank of the 100th rifle division; only the extraordinary stamina and courage shown by the fighters and commanders of these divisions - by no means accidental the first in the Red Army to receive the title of Guards - did not allow the Germans to break through the defenses organized in this way on the move.

The first "move" in the battle was made by the "Reds", and it turned out to be very effective. In combat report No. 1 of the headquarters of the 44th SC, this event - later included, with all sorts of exaggerations, in the summary of the Sovinformburo, books and textbooks - is described as follows: "In the **evening of 25.6.41.**

**exiled reconnaissance detachments of the 64th and 108th rifle divisions penetrated into the depths of the enemy's location and came across in the Shelukha, Dekshnyany, Putniki area (west of Radoshkovichi. - M.S. ) on the enemy's motorized units. As a result of the night battle, the discovered unit was completely destroyed (apparently, the headquarters of the military unit), the documents I had taken on 27.6.41 were forwarded to the front**

**headquarters. [462]** The matter did not come to the "complete destruction of the headquarters of the military unit", but the headquarters documents of the 39th Wehrmacht tank

corps were actually captured by the reconnaissance detachment of the 64th SD. True, in the ZhBD of the 20th German tank division, this fact was "shamefully" replaced by the destruction of documents: **"At about 20.00, the commander of the 39th corps, when trying to approach with the vanguard of the 92nd reconnaissance battalion (unit 20 TD. - M.S. ) from Olekhnovichi (settlement 9 km west of Radoshkovichi. - M.S. ) to Radoshkovichi unexpectedly enters into battle. Numerous losses in killed and wounded, also in cars. General is temporarily cut off. The vehicles of the general and headquarters of the corps were destroyed by the enemy along with the radio and other documents.** The corps commander, General of the Tank Troops Schmidt survived, but the documents, including an

operational map with the applied situation and detailed information on the combat composition of the corps, ended up in Moscow (in the future, the "echo" of this event passes through many documents of the Soviet headquarters). On the morning of June 26, the advanced units of the German tank divisions began to reach the line of the Minsk UR. Order No. 5 issued the day before demanded: **"The breakthrough of the 3rd Tank Group to Minsk is an urgent task and is of decisive importance for the operations of the Army Group Center ...**

**Participation in the capture of the city of Minsk is not the main task of the 3rd Tank Group, more important for it is to block the terrain on both sides of the city, especially the roads and railways in the east direction. [353]**

The available documentary descriptions of the events of June 26 are very chaotic and contradictory, it is almost impossible to put together a single intelligible picture from them. The "fog of war" (fragmentation, delay and unreliability of information) inevitably present in combat reports was in this case exacerbated by the state in which the divisions of the 3rd Panzer Group were located. Miracles do not happen, and a non-stop five-day march of 250–300 km led to the fact that single "mechanisms" began to fall apart into sepa

In the most pronounced form, this manifested itself in the 7th Panzer Division: in the morning of June 26, the rearguard of the division (anti-tank division with infantry units attached to it) was still fighting near Molodechno, the motorcycle battalion was in Radoshkovichi, the 6th motorized infantry regiment went to n.p. Matski, the advanced units of the tank regiment went to the road Kozekovo, Sloboda, the reconnaissance battalion of the division rushed to Rudna; thus, units of one division were scattered over a strip of 60 km, and the position of the 20th and 12th Panzer Divisions differed little from this. This leapfrog was also

reflected in the documents of the headquarters of the Red Army. In the Journal of Combat Operations 44 SC, the entry dated June 26 begins as follows: **"At 5.00 an enemy tank group of up to 1000 different vehicles broke through from Radoshkovichi to Kozekovo ... 6.00 enemy tank groups, motorized infantry on motorcycles and transporters, with the support of artillery and aviation, began attacking the front line fortified area..." [463]** However, in Combat Report No. 1 of the Corps Headquarters (compiled on June 30), the enemy infantry "disappears", while there are much fewer tanks: **"Continuously throughout the day, enemy tanks in small groups of 5-10 tanks, and sometimes more, continued to attack the 30th and 159th rifle regiments (64th rifle division), combining their actions with air raids. Enemy tanks spread along the roads to Gorodok Semkov and Minsk. During June 26, 1941, enemy infantry almost did not appear in**

**front of the front of the 44th SC. [462]** In the ZhBD of the 3rd Tank Group, the fighting on June 26 on the western approaches to Minsk is described rather sparingly: **"Parts of the 20th Panzer Division are stationed southeast of Radoshkovichi after they were forced to overcome serious enemy resistance at Grodek (probably, we are talking about Semkov Town. - M.S. ) ... Bombing attacks on the accumulations of our head groups of tanks ... A message is received from the headquarters of the 12th Panzer Division ... After breaking through the line of pillboxes northeast of Rakov, the reinforced motorcycle battalion of the 12th Panzer Division is on at the turn of the pillboxes in front of Shubniki (settlement 4 km west of Zaslavl. - M.S. ) on the road Rakov, Zaslavl; units of the 25th reinforced infantry regiment**

**of the 12th TD came into contact with units of the 20th Panzer Division southwest of Radoshkovichi ... "[353]** Only the final result is unambiguous - and confirmed by documents from both sides: **"An enemy tank grouping met with organized fire anti-tank artillery, divisional and corps artillery, during the whole day [June 26] did not break through the defense from**

Undoubtedly, this was facilitated by the fact that the headquarters of the 44th Rifle Corps (and from the evening of June 26, the headquarters of the 13th Army) was located in the Zhdanovichi area (now within the city of Minsk), just 20 km from the battlefield; The command post of the 64th Rifle Division was in the forest near the Ratomka

station, i.e., 10 km from the front line. The events of June 26 north of Minsk developed much more successfully for the enemy. Taking advantage of the fact that the line of defense, occupied by units of the 2nd Rifle Corps, passed south of the Kozekovo-Sloboda road, the advanced units of the 7th Wehrmacht Panzer Division reached the line of Rudnya, Sloboda, Smolevichi by evening, almost without a fight. This meant the exit of German tanks to the concrete highway Minsk, Borisov, Smolensk, which, in fact, was the main task of the Minsk operation. It is noteworthy that the communication system in the 3rd TGr by that time had gone wrong to such an extent that the German command learned of its success from reconnaissance aviation reports, and even then with an error ("according to an air reconnaissance report, units of the 39th tank corps left at **18.45 on the Minsk-Borisov highway; presumably, these are units of the 20th Panzer Division** ").

An attempt to pull up the main forces of the 7th TD and the left flank of the 20th TD to the highway met fierce resistance from units of the 2nd Rifle Corps. In the Journal of Combat Operations 2 SK, this is described as

follows: **"On June 26 at 15 o'clock the enemy attacked from the Vornovo area, Ostroshitsky Gorodok in the direction of Skurata, Kurgany** (settlement 6–9 km southeast of Ostroshitsky Gorodok. - *M.S.* ) . **At least a motorized infantry and airborne battalion and a tank battalion participated in the attack. Failing to encounter artillery** [151] , **the tanks broke through the front** [of defense] **of the infantry and began to go deeper into the location of the 85th Infantry Regiment** (100th Rifle Division) . **Up to 10 tanks were set on fire by bottles of gasoline. Part of the tanks reached Skurata, and several tanks were still set on fire in the area of the second echelon of the regiment, and only 14 tanks and groups of motorized infantry and motorcyclists reached Skurata. Having met the defense of the 542nd Infantry Regiment** (161st Rifle Division) here **and being unable to break through it, enemy tanks and infantry began to retreat**

**Another enemy group with a force of up to an infantry company and at least a company of tanks attacked in the direction of Papernya, Dubovlyany** (i.e., south of Ostroshitsky Gorodok to Minsk. - *M.S.* ) . **After 8 enemy tanks were burned, the infantry attack was repulsed with heavy losses for the enemy, and some units of the 355th Infantry Regiment** (100th Rifle Division) **rushed into hand-to-hand combat. The enemy retreated in disorder to the north ... At 17 o'clock the enemy, having collected**



***his units, repeated the attack, but with less strength and perseverance. Attacks in all directions were repulsed in front of the front line of defense ... The losses of the 100th and 161st rifle divisions, despite the complete absence of artillery, were insignificant. [461]***

On June 27, the situation deteriorated significantly - the battle formations of the German tank divisions naturally condensed (units and subunits that lagged behind on the march were pulled up to the front line), and the "thin steel threads" began to turn into an "armored fist". In addition, on the morning of June 27, the 12th Panzer Division was transferred to the 39th Panzer Corps, thus all three tank divisions fighting in the northwestern suburbs of Minsk were united under a single command. The defenders, meanwhile, had problems (insoluble in an environment of growing chaos) with ammunition. ***"By the evening of June 26, 1941, the artillery began to feel a shortage of shells, since there was absolutely no supply from the rear. The 15 vehicles sent by the commander of the 64th Infantry Division for shells to Minsk have apparently not returned to this day. A particularly acute shortage affected the 152-mm artillery shells, and there were no 122-mm howitzer shells at all. [462]*** Even the Germans noticed the lack of shells. ***"It seems that the enemy does not have a systematic supply of ammunition" (ZhBD 3rd TGr, entry dated June 26).***

The direction of the main attack of the German tank formations began to shift to the north. The 12th Panzer Division, having failed to break through the defenses of the 159th Infantry Regiment along the Rakov-Minsk highway on June 26, turned towards Zaslavl with the intention of breaking through further to Semkov Gorodok and approaching Minsk from the northwest. By 11 am the Germans occupied Zaslavl; the commander of the 64th rifle division, having committed the last reserves (one rifle battalion), forced the enemy to retreat; in this battle, the commander of the 159th joint venture, Lieutenant Colonel Belov, died. By 4 p.m., the 12th TD again occupied Zaslavl and tank units advanced another 5 km to the east, to the settlement.

Laporovichi. On the northern flank of the 64th Infantry Division (in the zone of Matsky, Kozekovo, Semkov Gorodok), two enemy tank divisions were already operating. The right-flank regiment of the division withdrew to the east without an order. In Combat Report No. 1 of the headquarters of the 44th SC, this is described as follows: ***"In the evening, we received the only radiogram of the 288th Infantry Regiment for the whole day, in which it was reported: "The regiment retreated to the forest northeast of Logoisk." We didn't know what was going on in this regiment. The people sent for communication did not return."*** [462] Left without r

in the evening held back the attacks of enemy tanks. The combat log of the 3rd TGr briefly records the unsuccessful attempts of the 20th Panzer Division to develop the offensive: ***"13.45. 20 TD should pass the line of bunkers 6–7 km southeast of Radoshkovichi ... 19.30. Parts of the 20th TD are still fighting against pillboxes south of Radoshkovichi.***

[353] June 27 entry in the ZhBD of the

44th Rifle Corps: ***"10.00. The chief of staff of the 64th Rifle Division, Colonel Belyshev, reported that during June 26 there were cases of permanent garrisons leaving bunkers [152] . The commander of the 44th SC, Divisional Commander Yushkevich ordered: to immediately send the deputy for political affairs to the commandant of the UR, to take the most stringent measures to restore the permanent garrisons in the bunker, in case of unauthorized abandonment of the bunker, to shoot those fleeing to the rear on the spot.***

***10.30. Established the movement of enemy tanks from Cape Zaslavl in the direction of Ratomka. In the area of Loshana there was a space that was not fired from the bunker, and enemy tanks went in this direction. The 30th regiment, having missed the tanks, remained at the occupied line ... 16.10.***

***Communication of the 288th Rifle Division with the headquarters of the 64th Rifle Division was lost. Enemy tanks ply along the roads of Rogovo, Kozekovo and Zaslavl, Laporovichi, while enemy motorized infantry operates in the direction of Kozekovo, Vyshkovo (settlement 7 km south of Kozekovo. - M.S. ). The 30th joint venture was surrounded. The counterattack of 30 joint ventures from Vyshkovo to the east was not successful. At 16.10, communication between the commander of the 64th rifle div did not recover.***

***18.00. By order of the commander of the 44th Rifle Corps, Major General Orlov and Regimental Commissar Usenko were sent to the 64th Rifle Division to assist the 64th Rifle Division and***

***to restore order ... During June 25, 26, 27, units of the 64th Rifle Division destroyed up to 350-400 tanks and armored vehicles enemy, several prisoners were taken. Major General Comrade Orlov took the toughest measures to return individual fleeing Red Army soldiers from the front to the rear, mainly from the UR garrison ... "[ 463] No less fierce***

battle flared on June 27 and north of Minsk. For the Germans, the day began with a strange episode: ***"The commander of the 39th Panzer Corps reports by radiogram: the 7th Panzer Division at 0600 repulsed an enemy tank attack from the direction of Borisov near Smolevichi with heavy losses from the enemy. The possibility of continued attacks should be taken into account. Are we talking about tank reserves from near Moscow?" [353] What was that? "Reserves from near Moscow", that is, the 1st motorized division of the 7th mechanized corps will appear at the river. Berezina only***

29

June, and Minsk never had it. Most likely, the Germans were attacked (strangely, from the east) by one of the numerous units of the defeated mechanized corps of the Western Front (or perhaps by the unit of the 5th TD of the North-Western Front, which had come from Vilnius to the eastern suburbs of Minsk). Be that as it may, reports of counterattacks involving tanks

appear repeatedly in German documents for June 27-28; the Germans even put into action an anti-tank reserve (one platoon of 50-mm anti-tank guns from the anti-tank division of the 7th TD and two 88-mm anti-aircraft guns placed in a firing position near the Minsk-Borisov highway) and reported on 35 enemy tanks destroyed on June 27.

The main events unfolded in the area of Ostroshitsky Gorodok, Beloruchye, where the 100th Infantry Division, supported by the 151st Corps Artillery Regiment, launched a counterattack to the north, advanced 10–12 km, and for a while cut off the communications of the 7th Tank Division, which had broken through to the Smolevichi area. divisions of the Wehrmacht. The situation was assessed as very alarming: ***“If the enemy continues organized attacks against units of the 7th Panzer Division near Smolevichi, the commander of the 3rd TGr ordered the commander of the 39th TK to avoid the enemy breaking through the positions of the 7th TD to withdraw with limited forces to the west.” [353]***

In reality, the Germans limited themselves to turning the reconnaissance battalion of the 7th Panzer Division by 180 degrees and at 16-30 set before it the task of advancing from Rudnya to Ostroshitsky Gorodok. [455] Probably, this episode is reflected in the report of the head of the political propaganda department of the 2nd Rifle Corps: ***“Before the infantry regiment with a tank battalion from Rudnya, they began to advance westward to the flank and rear of the 603rd Rifle Regiment (161st Rifle Division) , adjoining to the 100th sd. [464]*** The main role in releasing the communications of the 7th TD was played by the offensive launched at 7 pm by the motorized infantry units of the 20th Panzer Division from Matska to Beloruchye, supported by the actions of the division's tank regiment advancing along the road from the west.

The fierce battle continued until dark, the units of the 100th Rifle Division, which suffered heavy losses, withdrew to the Papernya metro station (a settlement near the Vyacha River, 3 km south of the Kozekovo-Sloboda road). [461] ***“When the batteries directed well-corrected fire on the enemy positions, resistance ceased, and our attack could be continued. Between the abandoned anti-tank guns, mortars and machine-gun nests lay the bodies of dead Soviet soldiers. Artillery and enemy tanks were able to escape.***

## June 28

The denouement came on June 28, when the advance units of the 17th and 18th Panzer Divisions of the 2nd Panzer Group began to approach the battlefield near Minsk from the southwest. From that moment on, the position of the 44th SC became completely hopeless - the last unused reserve, the 108th rifle division, which had previously been practically inactive, was now under attack by superior enemy forces:

*"10.00. At the headquarters of the 44th SC, information was received about the withdrawal of the 444th joint venture (108th rifle division) from the Dzerzhinsk (Koydanovo) area. The commander of the 44th SC ordered the commander of the 108th Rifle Division to change the command post closer to the 444th Rifle Regiment, to personally lead the battle of the 444th Regiment...*

*10.10. The commander of the 44th SC, Divisional Commander Yushkevich [153] gave a verbal order to his deputy, Major General Orlov, to leave for the 444th joint venture and restore order with an iron hand, demand to defend steadfastly, not a single step back, not to let a single person into the rear, in relation to the fugitives and not fulfilling the requirement to return to the front to use weapons.*

*10.45. The commander of the 44th SC, Divisional Commander Yushkevich, in order No. 5, requires the commander of the 64th Rifle Division and the garrisons of the UR to staunchly defend the occupied line and not a step back; all fugitives who leave the battlefield on their own should be returned to their place, in case o*

*12.00. 444th Rifle Regiment was attacked by several groups of tanks from the Dzerzhinsk region, totaling up to 70 tanks [154]. Enemy tanks suppressed one division of a light artillery regiment, defeated the 3rd division of the 49th corps artillery regiment and broke through the defenses of the 108th rifle division.*

*13.00. The enemy tanks that broke through from the Dzerzhinsk region attacked the command post of the 44th SC in the forest area east of Volkovich. As a result, 4 enemy tanks were destroyed by fire from an anti-tank battery, 2 tanks were hit and taken away in tow. There are losses at the command post: 7 people were killed, including three middle commanders, 22 were wounded. [463]*

In the meantime, the "old opponents" were by no means inactive either; The 12th Panzer Division finally broke through the defenses of the bled-out 159th Infantry Regiment (64th Rifle Division) and at 1600 entered Minsk, which had been destroyed by the bombing. In the center of the defense zone of the 64th Rifle Division, someone else offered resistance, as documents of the 20th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht sparingly testify: "On June 28 at 04.30, the **tank regiment with the 3rd battalion in front again goes on the offensive. At first, the movement is good, but then an increasingly stronger opponent comes across. Even with the support of one battalion of the 59th motorized infantry regiment, the resistance cannot be broken, and their own losses are increasing ...** " It is in this,

the last phase of the battle, the 20th TD loses the commander of the motorized infantry regiment (killed) and the commander of the artillery regiment (wounded). Only by the evening of June 28, the 20th TD comes out to the road Ostroshitsky Gorodok, Minsk and, turning south, enters

Minsk at 9-30 June 29. The headquarters of the 44th SC finally loses contact with its subordinate units. ***"At 24 hours, communication with the 108th Infantry Division completely ceased and was no longer resumed, and the delegates sent from the headquarters of the corps to the headquarters of the 64th Infantry Division - Assistant Chief of the Operations Department, Major Nartov and Head of the Logistics Department, Lieutenant Colonel Kuzin - did not return to the headquarters of the corps . Sent to the 108th Infantry Division, Assistant Chief of the Operations Department Art. Lieutenant Syroezhkin, a delegate from the 539th Infantry Regiment, and three commanders [from] the communications battalion of the corps, of which one commander of the communications battalion, Captain Arshavsky, also did not return."***

On June 29, the remaining commanders and soldiers of the 64th and 108th divisions concentrated in the forest between Ratomka and Staroe Selo; numerous groups of soldiers retreating from the west approached there, and on the evening of June 30, the commanders of the headquarters of the 3rd Army appeared together with its commander, Lieutenant General V.I. Kuznetsov. It was decided to break through to the southeast, and this decision turned out to be correct: the southern contour of the "Minsk pocket" was still very thin [155], units of the 17th German Panzer Division stretched out over a 60-km section from Stolbtsy to Minsk, and the 18th Guderian threw the tank tank around Minsk from the south, across the Svisloch and Volma rivers to the Minsk-Borisov highway. The way out of the encirclement began on the night of July 1-2, with fighting it was possible to withdraw about 3 thousand people from the "cauldron".

The withdrawal of the 2nd Rifle Corps (that is, the few units of the 100th and 161st divisions that retained combat capability and controllability) began earlier, the corresponding order was given by the corps commander, Major General Yermakov, at 3-00 on June 28. Parts with battles retreated to the eastern bank of the river. Volma, in a vast forest between the roads Minsk, Smolevichi and Minsk, Smilovichi. Several lines in the report of the political department of the corps eloquently testify to the situation:

***"Chief of Staff 331 SP Major Margon committed suicide. The regiment commander was seriously wounded, and the chief of staff, Major Margon, failed to lead the regiment's withdrawal, as a result, two battalions did not arrive at the intended assembly area. On another page of the archival file of the political department of the Western Front, the same episode is probably described as follows: "Major Morgun killed three commanders and seriously wounded himself." [467]*** The

losses of the enemy (as can be judged from the reports of units of the 7th Panzer Division) on June 28 were isolated, but one of them turned out to be

"very loud" - the commander of the tank regiment of the division, Colonel Rotenburg, was killed, already presented at that time for a reward for the successful crossing of the Neman near Alytus. The circumstances of the incident in the ZhBD of the 3rd TGr are described as follows: **"After a slight wound on the way to the divisional medical center, which went through the territory occupied by the enemy."** In the documents of the 2nd SC and the 100th sd, it is emphasized that **"a personal briefcase with documents was sent to the headquarters of the corps . "** [487]

Despite the fact that the enemy did not make any special efforts to pursue the departing (the Germans needed roads - the Borisov and Mogilev highways, and not the pursuit of the retreating through the forests), only small groups of soldiers and commanders crossed the Volma River. In the memorandum of the battalion commissar Dibrov (representative of the political department of the front in the 161st rifle division) we read: **" In the Volma region, from the remaining soldiers and command staff and assembled from 155 rifle divisions, 100 rifle divisions, 108 rifle divisions - a total of 1200 people - two battalions were formed. During the period of fighting, the 161st Rifle Division has insignificant losses in killed and wounded (approximately 354 people, maximum), the rest are lost, surrounded (the so-called missing), made their way to other units or walk along roads and forests and look for their units " .** [468]

Thus ended the three-day battle for Minsk. Considering that only tank formations operated from the German side, it is worth noting the level of equipment losses. On July 7, the command of the 3rd TGr of the Wehrmacht sent a report on losses to the logistics department of the General Staff of the Ground Forces. As of June 30, irretrievably lost: 30 tanks in the 19th TD, 25 tanks in the 7th TD (but it should be noted that 11 tanks of the division were lost near Alytus), 15 tanks in the 20th TD; As of July 4, the 12th TD irretrievably lost 11 tanks. **[486]** In total, in three divisions that fought near Minsk (7th TD, 12th TD, 20th TD), 51 tanks were irretrievably lost [156]. If we remove Pz-I machine-gun tankettes from the "tank" category, then 41 units will remain in the list of losses.

## Chapter 3.6 Western Front. Results

The closure of the encirclement near Minsk proceeded relatively slowly. For at least three days - June 29 and 30, July 1 - south of Minsk there was only a very leaky barrier from units and units of the 17th Wehrmacht Panzer Division approaching the city; just as thin was the "steel thread" of the 18th TD, stretching southeast of Minsk 35 km from the river. Volma to Zhodino. On a very conditional "front" between Minsk and Bobruisk, the 80-km gap between 47 TK and 24 TK was closed by two mobile formations: the 10th Panzer Division and the SS Reich Motorized Division.

Speaking abstractly, such a situation opened up the possibility of releasing the encircled grouping of troops on the Western Front with a strike from the east, but the high command of the Red Army did not even attempt to act in this way. On the morning of June 27 (the corresponding telegrams were handed over to the communication center of the General Staff at 7-00), signed by Budyonny, Malenkov and Pokrovsky (the Military Council of the so-called "Army Group of the Reserve of the High Command"), orders were given to deploy the 22nd, 20th and the 21st Army along the Western Dvina, Dnieper (Polotsk, Vitebsk, Orsha, Mogilev, Rogachev, Rechitsa) rivers. [470] It is possible (although hardly necessary) to argue about the "humanity" of such a decision, but from the standpoint of the cruel logic of war there were no other options: it was already too late to save the remnants of the defeated armies of the Western Front, and Moscow could only be saved by building a new front along the natural defensive line of the rivers Western Dvina and Dnieper.

Resistance in two "boilers of encirclement" (Bialystok, Slonim and Novogrudok, Minsk) continued until the first days of July. In short lines of reports from the headquarters of the GA "Center", the tragedy of the surrounded is described as follows:

**"June 29.**

***In some cases, the enemy still puts up stubborn and fierce resistance. Mainly tends to break through and retreat to the east. There is no single leadership of the operation for a breakthrough and withdrawal ... June 30th.***

***In the course  
of***

***completing the encirclement and combing the rear area, the enemy is still putting up desperate resistance. Artillery and enemy aircraft are inactive... The enemy in the Minsk area seems to be demoralized. No longer renders any organized***

*resistance, but still in groups up to a regiment from time to time strikes in order to release their encircled troops, sometimes with the support of tanks ... July 1. On the night of June*

*30 to July 1, stubborn battles continued only near Zelva, in other areas the enemy offered little resistance, in part there are signs of his complete demoralization. The number of prisoners and trophies is increasing. The total number of them is still difficult to establish... July 4th. The enemy in Nalibokskaya*

*Pushcha no longer had the strength to offer noticeable resistance, and from July 3 he began to go over to our side in ever increasing numbers. Captives and defectors testify that the troops were left without food and demoralized. Only where the commissars are left do they decide to resist..." [474]* As of July 4, inclusive, 217,000 people were taken prisoner in the zone

of operations of the Civil Aviation Center "Center", and, as stated in the report of the headquarters of the Civil Aviation Committee, "their number is **all increases more.**" [475] On July 8, the commander of the Army Group, Field Marshal von Bock, issued an order summarizing the results of the operation: **"The double battle for Bialystok and Minsk has ended. The army group was opposed by four Russian armies, numbering about 32 rifle divisions, 8 tank divisions, 6 mechanized brigades and 3 cavalry divisions. Of these, we managed to defeat 22 rifle divisions, 7 tank divisions, 6 mechanized brigades and 3 cavalry divisions ... As of yesterday, the number of prisoners and the amount of captured military property were calculated as follows: 287,704 people were taken prisoner, including several corps and division generals . Captured and destroyed 2585 tanks, including the heaviest ones, and 1449 artillery pieces..." [476]**

And these figures are not final. Judging by the certificate of the headquarters of the GA "Center" dated September 28, in the battle near Bialystok, Minsk, 338.5 thousand people were taken prisoner, 3188 tanks and 1830 guns were destroyed and

captured. [477] The figures given in Bock's order indicate that the Germans somewhat overestimated the initial strength of the Western Front grouping: they counted 49 formations (divisions and brigades), while in reality there were 44 divisions in the ZF, but taking into account the troops of the left flank, 11- th Army of the NWF (3-4 divisions that ended up in the offensive zone of the 3rd TGr of the Wehrmacht), the error is quite small. According to the German estimate, 11 divisions remained "un



It is impossible not to notice that this figure also completely coincides with the data given in the ZhBD of the Western Front: ***"Individual detachments and groups managed to get out of the encirclement, of which the 155th, 143rd and 24th rifle divisions turned out to be the most numerous. Small groups and individuals came out of the rest of the formations. Only the 50th, 100th, 161st, 64th, 108th, 143rd, 155th, 55th, 75th rifle divisions, the 20th and 14th mechanized corps, the 4th airborne corps and small remnants (up to 1000 people) of the 24th, 6th and 42nd rifle divisions.***

[478] Total - 12 rifle divisions and two mechanized corps. Mainly formations of the 2nd echelon of the front are listed, but there are also three divisions of the 4th Army (6th, 42nd and 75th). Later, in August of the 41st, a "List of military units of the Western OVO that left Western Belarus and participated in the battles as of 1.8.41" was compiled. [479] There are no significant differences in the lists; two rifle divisions (49th and 121st) were added to the number of those who left the encirclement, 17 MKs were added, but 14 MKs and the 24th Rifle Division were not included in the list. All this abundance of figures and numbers boils down to the fact that two-thirds of the military formations of the Western Front were completely lost, and one-third seems to have come out. Now let's try to clarify - in what condition (in what numbers) did the divisions that escaped encirclement leave?

The state of the primary documents of the troops of the Western Front (which was repeatedly mentioned above), and the state of the headquarters in which these documents were to be drawn up, is such that there can be no question of any exact figures; all that is possible is shaky estimates based on disparate and conflicting documentary sources. 6th and 42nd Rifle Divisions. These are the same "Brest

divisions" that were defeated in the first two days of the war, it was they who were described in the Opersvodka No. 1 of the headquarters of the 4th Army on the evening of June 24 as "remnants that do not have combat capability". Nevertheless, the compilers of the ZhBD front included them in the list of those who left the encirclement, however, with the clarification ***"small remnants (up to 1000 people)"***. There is also Opersvodka No. 10 of the front headquarters dated July 4, this document contains the following data: ***"6th Rifle Division - 340 people, 42nd Rifle Division - 4000 people, of which 50% are not uniformed."*** [480] Four thousand people in the division, which, together with the 6th Rifle Division, rolled back from Brest to the Dnieper in a week, is fantastic; a possible clue may be that already beyond the Dnieper, mobilized personnel were enrolled in the division (hence the strange phrase about "50% are not uniformed").

Mentioned in Opersvodka No. 10 and the 55th Infantry Division, by July 4 there were 800 people in it.

Included in the released 14th mechanized corps; in accordance with the report on the hostilities of the 14th MK, by the time the corps was withdrawn for reorganization (June 29), there remained in its divisions: 285 people in the 205th MD, 450 in the 22nd TD, 1090 in the 30th TD. [386] An average of 600 people per division.

The 17th mechanized corps was included in the August "List of military units". The report of the corps command quite self-critically states: **"It was not possible to establish the nature and number of actual losses in the corps."** Nevertheless, there are a few words in the report that allow a tentative estimate of the number of personnel who left the encirclement: **"During July 14, 15, 16, 17, a detachment of 1400 people was detached from the units and remnants of the corps, which defended the line of the river. Sozh ... On July 22, by order of Major General Borzikov, a motorized rifle regiment was formed from the remnants of the corps and sent to the advanced positions in the Yartsevo area under the command of Major Shipilyuk and on July 25 a motorized rifle battalion was formed. [403]** Even if we assume that all three formations ("detachment", regiment and battalion) were made up of different people, and exclude the possibility of a fresh replenishment of the corps, then even with these, by no means indisputable assumptions, an average of 17 MKs per division will have to 1.6-1.8 thousand.

Human.

In the previous chapter, the memorandum of the battalion commissar Dibrov (representative of the political department of the front) was mentioned, which says that from the remnants of the three divisions that went beyond the Volma River, two battalions with a total strength of 1200 people were formed. Three divisions are the 155th, 100th and 108th rifle divisions. The first of them, we note, is mentioned in the ZhBD front in the list of **"the most numerous."** It is also noteworthy that these three divisions are from three different corps, it is quite appropriate to assume that other remnants of these divisions also got out of the encirclement somewhere. In particular, the 44th SC (64th and 108th Rifle Divisions, together with units of other formations of the front that joined them) withdrew about 3,000 people from the encirclement.

Perhaps the most numerous and successful - against this terrifying background - was the 24th Iron Division, in which about 2 thousand people left the encirclement. Summary: at the most optimistic estimate,

the average number of personnel of the divisions of the Western Front that emerged from the encirclement was no more than 1.5 thousand people. Then everything is considered very simple: 18

divisions (12 rifle plus two mechanized corps) of 1.5 thousand people each. In total, 27 thousand are recruited. Let's round up to 30. Let's increase the resulting number by one and a half to two times (in addition to divisions, the front also included corps, army, rear, military training and other units and institutions). Total: 45-60 thousand people, and this is all that remains of the Western Special Military District. And it was in it on the eve of the war - as indicated in the famous "Statistical Collection No. 1" - 600 thousand people (and this is not counting the 71 thousand called up for "training camps").  
 $600 - 60 = 540$ .

Nine-tenths of the personnel are irretrievably lost. In absolute numbers - more than half a million. Indirect confirmation of the correctness of such an assessment of losses can be found in Krivosheev's well-known and quite official statistics book ("The classification has been removed"), according to which the Western Front lost 521 thousand small arms from June 22 to July 9.

A few words (without pretensions to encyclopedic coverage) about the fate of the commanders of the defeated

front. Killed in the first battles and when leaving the encirclement: commander of the 6th mechanized corps, Major General M.G. Khatskilevich and the head of artillery of the corps, Major General A.S. Mitrofanov, commander of the 13th mechanized corps, Major General P.N. Akhlyustin, commander of the 21st Rifle Corps, Major General V.B. Borisov, commander of the 27th Infantry Division, Major General A.M. Stepanov, commander of the 29th

Panzer Division, Colonel N.P. Studnev. Missing (died under unclear circumstances): Commander of the 5th Rifle Corps, Major General A.V. Garnov, his deputy Major General F.I. Budanov and the head of artillery of the corps, Major General G. P. Kozlov, deputy commander of the 13th mechanized corps, Major General V.I. Ivanov, chief of staff of the 11th mechanized corps, Colonel S.A. Mukhin, chief of staff of the 6th mechanized corps, Colonel E.S. Koval, commander of the 6th Infantry Division, Colonel Popsuy-Shapko, commander of the 8th Infantry Division, Colonel N.I. Fomin, commander of the 55th Infantry Division, Colonel D.I. Ivanyuk, commander of the 25th Panzer Division (13th MK), Colonel N.M. Nikiforov, commander of the 36th Panzer Division (17th MK), Colonel M.Z. Miroshnikov, commander of the 209th motorized division, Colonel A.I. Ants.

Captured: Commander of the 4th Rifle Corps, Major General E.A. Egorov, commander of the 6th Cavalry Corps I.S. Nikitin, Chief of Staff of the 21st Rifle Corps, Major General D.E. Zakutny, head of ABTU 10th

Army Colonel G. I. Antonov, Deputy Commander of the 11th Mechanized Corps, Major General P.G. Makarov and the head of artillery of the corps, Major General N.M. Starostin, commander of the 13th Infantry Division, Major General A.Z. Naumov, commander of the 49th Infantry Division, Colonel K.F. Vasiliev, commander of the 4th Panzer Division, Major General A.G. Potaturchev, commander of the 29th motorized division, Major General I.P. Bikzhanov, commander of the 36th Cavalry Division, Major General E.S. Zybin. After the end of the war, Yegorov, Naumov, Zybin, Zakutny were executed, Potaturchev died in prison before trial, Antonov actively collaborated with

Vlasov, but was able to avoid repatriation to the USSR. Wounded: Chief of Staff of the 3rd Army, Major General A.K. Kondratiev, commander of the 85th Infantry Division, Major General A.V. Bondovsky, commander of the 86th Infantry Division, Colonel M.A. Zashibalov, commander of the 6th Cavalry Division, Major General M.P. Konstantinov, commander of

the 31st Panzer Division (13th MK), Colonel A.S. Kalikhovich. **[488]** Total - 34 senior command general positions).

The fate of the high command of the Western Front was even more tragic. Front Commander General of the Army D.G. Pavlov, Chief of Staff, Major General V.E. Klimovskikh, chief of artillery, Lieutenant-General N.A. Klich, chief of communications, Major General A.T. Grigoriev, Deputy Commander of the Air Force of the Front, Major General Tayursky, were arrested and shot. In one case with Pavlov, the commander of the 4th Army, Major General Korobkov, was convicted and shot. Commander of the Air Force of the Western Front, Major General I.I. Kopets shot himself (or was killed during his arrest). Chief of the Operations Department of the Front Headquarters, Major General I.I. Semyonov was arrested and sentenced to 10 years in prison; in October 1942 he was released early and reinstated in his rank. **[382]**

Now we will try to estimate the size of the losses of personnel with which the GA "Center" paid for such a crushing defeat of its enemy. The operational summary of the headquarters of the 9th Army of the Wehrmacht dated July 2, 1941 indicated that from June 22 to June 28, the Army lost 4,764 people, including 1,449 irretrievably (killed and missing). **[482]** In terms of the 12 infantry divisions that were part of it, this means the loss of 57 people per day (in fact, even less, because in addition to the infantry divisions, the Army included separate units and units of the corps and army subordination). By the standards of June 1941, this figure is slightly higher than usual; Can

to assume that the total amount was affected (increased) by the losses of the infantry divisions of 20 AK, which repelled the blow of Boldin's KMG.

The losses of the 3rd Tank Group are much less: from June 22 to July 2, only 1769 people, including 583 irretrievably. **[483]** In terms of 7 divisions that were part of the Group, it turns out 24 people a day - a phenomenal figure, especially taking into account the combat path of the 3rd TGr and its "hopelessly outdated" (let's return this sonorous definition to Soviet historians) tank fleet [ 157].

The operational summary of the headquarters of the GA "Center" dated July 3-30 on July 3 says that **"according to incomplete data, the losses of the 4th and 9th Armies and the 3rd Tank Group are: 221 officers and 2655 soldiers were killed, 389 officers and 7125 soldiers, 20 officers and 945 soldiers are missing. [484]** In total, this gives a loss

of 11,355 people, including 3,841 irrevocably. The losses of the 2nd Tank Group are not reflected in the above operational summary. However, there is known data on the so-called. "ten days" (summary lists of Wehrmacht losses for every 10 days of the war), according to which from June 22 to July 20, Guderian's Panzer Group lost 4368 people, including 1142 irretrievably. At first glance, the dates do not match, but it must be borne in mind that on the morning of July 3, both Tank Groups (2nd and 3rd) were consolidated into one 4th Panzer Army (later this decision was recognized as not very successful , and everything returned "to normal"); thus, the losses recorded in the ten-day periods as losses on July 20 are, in fact, losses at the end of the day on July 2.

Thus, with sufficient accuracy for a rough estimate, the lower limit of the losses of the GA "Center" for the first ten days of the war can be considered a figure of 16 thousand people ( $11\,355 + 4368$ ), including 5 thousand irrevocably ( $3841 + 1142$ ). Taking into account the inevitable inaccuracy and incompleteness of the reports compiled in the hot pursuit of the battles, the figures obtained should be increased by 20-25%. Thus, we come to the upper estimate of the total losses suffered by the GA "Center" during the defeat of the Western Front (from 22.6 to 2.7), **in the amount of 19 - 20 thousand people. An average of 40 people per day per division. The**

**ratio of losses to the losses of the enemy (the Red Army) is about 1 to 27.** If we consider only irretrievable losses, then the proportions are completely crazy (1 to 80), but this - in this particular case - is a deeply wrong approach, because in the Red Army, the very ratio of the number of wounded and irretrievably out of action was absolutely abnormal (irretrievable losses are many times higher than sanitary ones due to the huge proportion of "missing" in the structure of losses).

no one, and to this day no one has dared to discuss this terrible topic. Therefore, we restrict ourselves to a "modest" proportion of 1 to 27. Maybe even 1 to 25.

Arithmetic mean figures usually do not reflect the full picture, so it is worth "tweaking the sharpness" and consider the losses of the German divisions that suffered the maximum damage.

The largest (probably the largest in the GA "Center") were the losses of the 18th Panzer Division (2nd TGr). During the first 10 days of the war, the division lost (mainly in battles against the 47th rifle corps near Slonim, Baranovich) 1346 people.

The 45th Infantry Division, which stormed the Brest Fortress, lost 1120 people in 8 days of fighting; the average daily loss is 140 people, and this is also a record high for the GA "Center" values.

The 29th motorized division (2nd TGr), which for 4–5 days kept the exit from the Bialystok "sack" under numerous blows, lost 1026 people before July 2; about 100 a day. The battles that took

place on June 25-28 in the area of Traba, Ilye were conducted by the 24th Iron Division of General Galitsky did not go unnoticed for the statistics of the losses of the Wehrmacht. As G. Goth, commander of the 3rd TGr, writes (moreover, he writes referring to an official report) in his memoirs, **"during the first three weeks of fighting, the losses of the 19th tank and 14th motorized divisions in total amount to 163 officers and 3422 non-commissioned officers - an**

**officer and a soldier. [485]** On average, 85 people a day. The losses of the 7th Panzer Division on June 26 were probably the maximum; as noted above, the division lost more than 193 people that day ("more", because this figure does not take into account the losses of one of the division's motorized infantry regiments). This "peak" level of losses is most likely due to the fact that on June 26 the division came under a massive attack by Soviet aircraft; on all other days her casualties were much lower, totaling about 500 in June.

All this abundance of figures is not given at all in order to simply tire the reader. The size of the average, large, maximum ("peak") one-day losses of the Wehrmacht divisions gives us a kind of "support platform" that allows us to assess the real capabilities of the weapons of that era and the scale of potentially possible "bloody losses" (there is such an eerie term in military affairs, meaning the totality killed and wounded).

In general, for the German divisions of the GA "Center" the first week of the war consisted of marches, occasionally broken by separate short skirmishes. This "regime of operations" corresponded to the loss of 40-50 people per division per day. The 45th Infantry near the walls of the Brest Fortress did not march, but fought a tense battle; the result is "bloody losses" of about 140 people a day. Fierce multi-day battles had to be waged by the 7th, 18th, 19th tank, 29th motorized divisions - there the losses approach (or noticeably exceed) the mark of 100 people a day. Of course, all these figures may be incomplete and inaccurate; it is quite possible that some episodes of intense fighting were outside the scope of our book, respectively, we can assume that the real losses in the divisions of the Wehrmacht at some critical moments reached the level of 200-250 people per day. And what do we see on the other side of the

front? The 128th Rifle Division (11th Army of the Northwestern Front) disappears in one day on June 22; there were 15.5 thousand people in the division - where did they get lost? The left neighbor of the 128th Rifle Division was the 56th Rifle Division of the Western Front; in the Combat report No. 3 of the headquarters of the 3rd Army dated June 12-30, June 24, it is stated that ***"as a result of the fighting, the 56th SD has two small scattered detachments numbering up to 700-800 people."*** What kind of battles are these in which the division loses 4-5 thousand people a day? You can argue endlessly about the performance characteristics of Soviet and German machine guns, mortars, but no technical nuances can explain the 20-fold difference in the daily losses of

opposing divisions. However, these questions are quite rhetorical. The answer is known. The situation that has developed on the Western Front is noteworthy only in that the process, which in the documents of the headquarters of the Red Army was indicated by the words "the division scattered", finds its clear quantitative expression in the number of prisoners captured by the Germans. If we take the above estimate of the total losses of the front (540 thousand people) as a basis, then the 338.5 thousand prisoners taken into

account by the Germans account for 63% of the losses of the Western Front [158]. Here it is also very important to emphasize that the total number of "scattered" was undoubtedly greater than the number captured by the Germans. A certain number (thousands? tens of thousands?) of former Red Army soldiers, dressed in civilian clothes, escaped captivity - took refuge in remote forest villages, returned to their homes (in conditions of a very leaky "encirclement ring" this was feasible on a large geographical scale, including movement of residents of eastern Poland to western Poland), went to the partisans, signed

etc. There is no doubt that many thousands (tens of thousands?) of the "encircled in June" wandered eastward along the forest paths for several months and came out to their own after compiling all the reports, reports and "lists"

mentioned above. To give any realistic estimate of the number of "evaders" (who left their unit, but at the same time evaded getting into a German prisoner of war camp) is very difficult - if not impossible. Rare figures, scattered among various documents of the Soviet headquarters, only allow us to assert that there were many times more missing people than those killed.

***"During the period of fighting, the 161st SD (of which, as stated in the same political report, only 700 people remained. - M.S. ) has insignificant losses in killed and wounded (about 354 people, maximum), the rest were lost, were surrounded (the so-called missing), made their way to other parts or walk along the roads and forests and look for their parts. [468]***

***"In the 797th Rifle Regiment of the 232nd Rifle Division, the following were killed and wounded: command personnel - 14, junior command personnel - 15, enlisted personnel - 113, and missing: command personnel - 31, junior command personnel - 82, privates - 904 (in general the ratio is 1 to 7. - M.S. ) . There is every reason to believe that most of the missing fled, deserted from the***

***battlefield and are in the forests in the area of the division. [489] "It must be assumed that in terms of personnel the losses were expressed in a figure not exceeding 5% of the total,"*** this is written in the report on the combat operations of the 17th mechanized corps, which actually lost three-quarters of its personnel. **[403]** The 86th Air Base (ground personnel of the

airfield near the city of Alytus) lost 1 dead, 3 wounded, 242 missing in action within 7 days of the war. [363] Of course, **these** are "separate special cases". It is equally indisputable that no one has yet found a single opposite "special case" - an example of a division in which the losses in killed and wounded would be greater than the number of those who fled. Moving from the particular to the general, from the losses of individual units and formations to the losses of the entire Western Front, one can only offer a very shaky estimate based on the assumption that the number of killed and wounded on one side (in this case, in Red Army units) could not have been more than 4-5 times the corresponding indicator of the enemy (the Wehrmacht). With this (yes, very shaky and hardly provable) assumption, it can be assumed that the losses of the Western Front consisted of 80-100 thousand killed and wounded and abo



## Part 4. Value judgments

Documents of the department of intelligence and counterintelligence of the 17th army corps (GA

"South"). [490] June 26, 1941 Summary report on the results of the interrogation of prisoners ***"... The uniform is in very poor condition, partly tattered. The shoes are partially badly worn, spare soles are used. The prisoners complain very much about the poor food supply in their units; they say that they were given raw millet as a allowance. On 25:6 many prisoners complained that they had not eaten anything since the beginning of the war. Some prisoners give the impression of people who are severely emaciated and apathetic to what is happening to them ... In addition to the commissars, only a***

***relatively small percentage of personnel is in accordance with the political structure in the country. Almost all of the officers are communists or come from the ranks of a youth communist organization. Everyone has a negative attitude towards collective farms...***

***In the testimonies of the prisoners, their fear of being shot in captivity can be traced. According to them, if there was confidence that they would not be shot, then perhaps a much larger number of Russian military personnel would prefer to surrender. Four prisoners claim that they allegedly heard about how the soldiers of the 98th artillery regiment abandoned their guns and equipment and fled.***

***It was noticed that most of the prisoners had their buttonholes torn off, and also sleeves and other insignia..."***

July 12, 1941 Report on the interrogation of prisoners of war ***"... It was again confirmed that most of the delivered prisoners decided to go over to our side under the influence of leaflets dropped by us from the air. When asked why entire formations do not lay down their arms, the answer was given that our leaflets are still perceived by the majority with skepticism and their content is not fully trusted. Their own commanders, of course, are making efforts to reinforce existing doubts. The difficulty of the transition also lies in the fact that their own commanders without hesitation shoot anyone if they see an intention to lay down their arms. So are our machine guns, which immediately go into action as soon as***

**someone is seen, make escape too risky. Everything shows, however, that the chosen method of facilitating hostilities by dropping leaflets from the air is valuable for us ... "** July 24, 1941 Report on

the interrogation of a defector " ... **The mood in**

**the unit** (separate machine-gun battalion of the fortified area. - *M.S.* )  
**depressed . Everyone has been wanting to end the war for a long time, but by harsh intimidation they are forced by the commanders to continue the fight. After the work of the [German] loudspeaker, the commanders went around with their pistols cocked and threatened to shoot anyone who tried to run towards the Germans. Despite the intimidation, under the impression of propaganda, the soldiers agreed to secretly leave the pillboxes at night, lock up the commanders there and run over to the Germans. But this plan was thwarted by a sudden nighttime retreat. The defector, however, is convinced that the rest of the soldiers will leave the unit anyway at the first opportunity. He himself managed to escape when, during the withdrawal, he was put on guard for observation in**

**case of a German attack.** July 24, 1941 Report on the

mood in the enemy troops "... **Prisoners of war report that only now, while in captivity, they can talk openly with each other. In the Red Army, no one dared to express their opinion, as they saw every listener as a spy. That is why commissars and communist commanders are so rarely dismissed. It is extremely difficult to run across to the Germans, this can only happen during the German offensive, at the moment when the troops make a disorderly retreat. The prisoners are firmly convinced that sooner or later the entire army will defect to the Germans, since none of the Red Army men understands what he must fight for. The bulk of the Red Army soldiers are collective farmers who are hostile to the Soviet regime, since their private property was taken away from them. Most of the Red Army men's fathers were exiled, killed, or live in dire need. The troops continue to resist only under the strongest terror ... "**

August 6, 1941 Report on the interrogation of

defectors "**The 9th company of the 3rd battalion of the 8th SS motorized infantry regiment delivered the following Soviet-Russian defectors** (9 people are listed, all natives of Leningrad, aged 18–19 years. - *M.S.* ). **These**

**defectors reported the following: The mood in our military unit is very bad. We do not feel any hatred towards the Germans. Our commissar, a Jew, told us that the Germans would tear us to pieces, but we did not**

***what was written in the German leaflets that were dropped on our unit from aircraft.***

***The satisfaction was very poor. We received 400 g of bread a day. At first, we were given only 100 g of bread a day. The bread was very bad. We received monetary allowance in the amount of 8 rubles. per month. The mood in Leningrad is very bad. People are waiting for the Germans to enter the city, and then they hope for better times. In the patch of woods where we came from, there are thousands more soldiers who want to run across. Our military unit is self-disbanding."***

Documents of the intelligence and counterintelligence department of the 3rd Tank Group

(GA "Center"). [491] July 14, 1941

Situation in Belorussia ***"Just as in Lithuania, on the territory of Belorussia, formerly belonging to Poland, the population, with the exception of the Jews, welcomes the German troops as liberators. Reason: forced collectivization in the countryside and the exiles and executions that accompanied it. We have not found confirmation of the fact of mass bloody massacres of arrested civilians, as the population assured us about. Probably, those arrested were taken to the east as the German troops approached. The joy of the population - Belarusians (Greek Catholics) and Poles (Roman Catholics) - is the same, there are no sharp cor***

***It is noteworthy that the inhabitants of the regions of Belarus, which were permanently part of the Soviet Union, look at the entry of German troops without discontent. Reason: collective farming on earth has degenerated into a coercive system in which people work day and night and do not see the fruits of their labor. The famine of 1933, 1934, 1935 is still well remembered by the peasants. If the people at first do not everywhere express their joy, then this is due to the uncertainty with the future and the intimidation carried out by the Soviet government, which announced that it would be the duty of every German***

***to destroy the Russians. In the cities there is more indifference, which in big cities, for example in Minsk, develops into rejection and enmity. Indifference, however, turns into hatred for Stalin after, following Stalin's directives from his speech of 3/7/1941, the communists began to burn cities, such as Vitebsk, before retreating. Since people in towns and collective farms have hitherto lived on the fact that the state daily distributes vital products from its storehouses, the people rob in order not to starve. As far as possible, German troops***

***they are trying to stop the robberies and are making efforts for a fair distribution ...***

***Any manifestation of disobedience to the Soviet regime has not been established. The step from criticism and internal rejection of the Soviet order to active resistance is very difficult for this people, so much exhausted and deprived of initiative. Since***

***the population feels themselves to be Belarusians, feels a commonality with Russia, and their negative position towards Moscow is of a socio-economic nature, it is very likely that in the Russian regions we will find a similar state of affairs, as in the described area.***

August 4, 1941 Report on the attitude of the Russian civilian population towards the Germans (Fig.

33) ***"In order to fulfill the task assigned to me of clarifying and collecting information about the behavior and position of the Russian civilian population, on August 3 I visited two churches in the city of Velizh. The churches were so crowded with believers (August 2, the Orthodox Church celebrates Ilyin's Day. - M.S. ), that not everyone found a place in them and were forced to stand in front of the church and in the aisles. It was an amazing sight to see these simple people bowing and crying while listening intently to their priest's sermon. After all, the Russian people have been forcibly taken away for 22 years the opportunity to gather for church holidays. With tears in their eyes, they give thanks on their knees to a higher power for the liberation of them by the German army from the yoke of communism. They went into their gratitude and joy so much that the final prayer of the priest, for the victory of the German troops and their great Fuhrer, was taken to heart. These poor people remember with horror the cruel tyranny of Bolshevism and, as they admit, it would be better for them, hanging on the running boards of our***

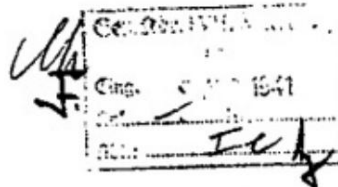
Sonderführer Lt. Hans Melartopaeus  
beim Stab LVII.A.K.

Qu./Gef.Std., den 4. 8. 41.

Betr.: Eindrücke über die Einstellung der russischen Zivilbevölkerung  
dem Deutschtum gegenüber.

An

Qu.



In Ausfüllung der mir gestellten Aufgabe, Eindrücke über das Verhalten und über die Einstellung der russischen Zivilbevölkerung zu sammeln, besuchte ich zwei Kirchen am 3. 8. 41 in Welisch. Die Kirchen waren so zahlreich von russischen Gottesgläubigen besucht, sodass nicht alle in der Kirche Platz fanden, sondern zum Teil vor der Kirche und in den Gängen Aufstellung nehmen mussten. Es war ein überwältigender Anblick, diese primitiven Menschen kniend und weinend der Predigt ihres Priesters aufmerksam zuhören, zu sehen. Umso mehr, da man dem russischen Volke 22 Jahre gewaltsam die Möglichkeit genommen hatte, sich zu solchen kirchlichen Feiern zusammenzufinden. Mit Tränen in den Augen dankten sie kniend der höheren Macht für die Befreiung durch die deutsche Wehrmacht vom Joch des Kommunismus. Sie gingen in ihrer Dankbarkeit und Freude soweit, dass der russische Priester in seinem Gebet für den Sieg der deutschen Wehrmacht und seinem großen Führer, den sie jetzt auch als den ihrigen betrachteten, mit einschloß. Mit Schrecken gedenken diese armen Menschen der rück=

Rice. 33. Report on the attitude of the Russian civilian population towards Germans

Documents of the intelligence and counterintelligence department of the 10th Panzer Division (GA "Center")

[492] July 10, 1941 Subject: testimonies of

prisoners **"8 prisoners showed that they were from the 542nd Rifle Regiment (161st Rifle Division, participant in the battle for Minsk - M.S. ). The regiment was involved near Minsk, after which it was in retreat. The last rearguard action took place 3 days ago. The officers left in cars, only some junior communist commanders remained in the unit. Most of the regiment fled, not wanting to fight anymore. When the prisoners learned from the villagers that if they surrendered to the German troops, nothing would happen to them, they immediately, seeing our reconnaissance vehicles, came out to meet us with raised hands.** July 20, 1941 Subject: testimonies of prisoners **"Last night a Russian soldier ran across to our forward guard near Leonidovka and gave the following testimony:**

**On July 7, the 32nd Infantry Regiment was transferred from Voronezh to Yelnya. Here he was involved in the construction of field fortifications. In addition, 20 thousand workers from Moscow were involved in the construction of fortifications. The supply of workers and the regiment was extremely scarce. In the last two days, no food was issued at all, a riot broke out in the regiment, and some of the military personnel decided to go over to the Germans. About them, after which the rebels were aware of the intention [of the command] , involved in the front line during the German tank attacks.**

**To the north and south of Yelnya, a large amount of artillery was deployed (anti-tank guns with a caliber of 152, 76 and 50 mm). The commander told the soldiers that 9 generals were shot for disobeying orders (at that time, the command of the Western Front had not yet been shot, but Stalin's GKO Decree No. 169 had already been announced to the troops, and there were exactly 9 names of the arrested generals. - M.S. ). The place where the regiment was located was designated as field post 116. The troops located in Yelnya and around it were severely exhausted as a result of the fighting in recent days, and only the fear of being shot in captivity keeps them from moving to us.**

July 26, 1941

**"Dear Girgenson [159], In addition to the fact that everything is fine with me, I announce the following today: We can state with confidence that the German leaflets have a good effect on both Russian soldiers and the civilian population. The commanders of my reconnaissance groups are constantly convinced of this."**

**Now, when everything is put in order, we are going to establish economic life, namely agriculture. Here, in the center of Russia, 60 km southeast of Smolensk, the rural population wishes the Red Commissars to go to hell. It responds to our call to start haymaking without delay. It supplies us, often voluntarily, with milk, onions, and meat. If you send here a few calm plus people with agricultural and technical knowledge, who know the language, and manage the people, then it will not be difficult to establish a normal life and harvest here without great losses.**

**The standard of living of the people here is so low that even a small part of the income from agricultural activities would be quite enough to significantly improve the social situation, increase purchasing power, on the one hand, and stimulate the desire to work, on the other.**

***We will not be able to abolish large collective enterprises, and this is not necessary. If only because there are no more peasants in our understanding, that is, people capable of working independently. But if these poor state day laborers, instead of half a morgen of land (approximately 12 "acres." - M.S. ), one pig and one cow, are given all this in double quantity for private use, then they will be happy and satisfied. In addition, if we say to the community: from the harvest harvested from your land plots, you will receive so much more% of the profit, then in this way we will stimulate the initiative, and as a result of selection based on the results of work, we will be able to lay the foundation for a new middle class, the best of which it will be possible to give the opportunity to grow to leadership positions ... "***

Documents of the Intelligence and Counterintelligence Department of the 48th Tank

Corps (GA Yug) [493] July 16 , 1941 ***from airplanes. The content is passed from one person to another orally, mainly by women and children, as they are reportedly able to talk to the soldiers without difficulty. Defectors use to escape, mainly, a moment of confusion, for example, during German air raids. A noteworthy circumstance is that some of them already come from the rear areas of***

***the Russians. So, some defectors said that they had to make their way from the Kiev region in a western direction before meeting with the first German troops*** (in mid-July, the 41st part of the German 48th TK fought in the Berdichev area, that is, those who wished to surrender had to go through the order 150 km - M.S. ).

***It is noteworthy that Muslims from among the prisoners during interrogations emphasize their anti-communist views. The tone in which they speak of Bolshevism is notable for its particular sharpness and firm confidence in [their] superiority.***

***The prisoners brought German leaflets with them and told independently of each other that the leaflets were given to them by the officers after the flight of the commissars ... "***

Documents of the Intelligence and Counterintelligence Department of the 4th Air Corps of the

Luftwaffe. [494] No. 1 082/41, secret

***"Romanian troops captured the political commissar of the NKVD unit of the naval base in Odessa, who answered the following questions: ... The***

***Russian population does not know the true situation at the front. The population knows only about the battles in the Kyiv region, near Belaya Tserkov and Zhytomyr. The loss of Bessarabia was not reported until 22 August. It was reported only about the battles on the river. Rod. The Russian population has been manipulated by propaganda in such a way that it c***

***The interrogated believes that after further German successes, such as the capture of Leningrad, Moscow, Kyiv, etc., the population will rise. This will be facilitated by a large shortage of food and clothing. Women will rise first. This revolution could be accelerated by constant leaflet propaganda and the release of a few reliable prisoners who can be returned. These prisoners should spread the word that the prisoners are not killed at all here, but are treated well. Probably, after the loss of political and industrial centers, the influence of the***

***authorities on the population will weaken, and these means (terror) will no longer be effective ... He believes that resistance can last no longer than 3 months, since all reserves will be exhausted due to the losses incurred. The plight of the population and the losses suffered can break the resistance of the governing bodies ... "***

Diary entries of a Wehrmacht soldier Willy Kubek [495]

***"After a month and a half of the Russian campaign, after I had formed an idea about the civilians of Ukraine, it occurs to me to save my memories for the post-war years. The first thing that struck me was the friendly attitude of the civilian population. I was not aware of a single case of an attack on our soldiers, at least in the southern sector of the front. At that time, we were not afraid of any hostile acts on the part of the civilian population, even when we were behind enemy lines when we went on reconnaissance. Going to the village to get food, we were also not afraid that one of the locals would stab us with a knife or an ax in the back. I do not know of any such incident, otherwise the command would strictly forbid such raids. According to my personal impression, the civilian***

***population wholeheartedly hated their great leader, Stalin. We constantly heard: "Lenin is Gut, Stalin ..." - and at these words people made a significant gesture, which everywhere meant the same thing and therefore***



***clear: noose around the neck. Most of all, Stalin was hated for the collectivization of agriculture. After it, all lands confiscated from wealthy peasants, agricultural implements, livestock, poultry were declared the property of the state, in other words, transferred to collective ownership. But the main word remained with the hated partocrats. All the inhabitants of this or that village worked together, for this they received bread and money - very little - about half the Reichs mark per day in terms of our money. The main profit was appropriated by the state, the villagers were left only so much so that they could somehow survive. From us, the inhabitants of Ukraine expected that we would put an end to***

***collectivization. Maybe our leadership will understand that this is what opened up the opportunity to make Ukraine an ally. I am firmly convinced that many peasants were on our side in the struggle against the Stalinist regime. There was no unit in which volunteers from local residents would not actively cooperate with us ... "***

From the protocol of the interrogation of Major General Zakutny, former chief of staff of the 21st

Investigative Committee [496] ***"... According to the general, this war is extremely unpopular in Russia and can easily lead to the overthrow of the current ruling regime. The Soviet government can avoid this danger only by concluding a separate peace in time. Of great importance, according to the general, is also the question of how far the front will move to the east. If the Germans succeed in occupying large areas of Russia, the Soviet government will face the threat that a Russian parallel government will be formed in the occupied territory. The appearance of such an opportunity is especially dangerous for the Soviet government, and therefore it will certainly have to prevent the creation of a parallel government by concluding a separate peace in a timely manner. If it is not possible to avoid the creation of a parallel government, then thanks to the conclusion of such a peace [the Soviet leadership] will try to retain at least the remnants of the territory of Russia. Most of his political views Zakutny stated on his own initiative, and he was not asked specific questions in this regard. He clearly felt the need to speak on this subject, so that his statements on this subject should be given special weight.***

From the memorandum of the Chief Military Prosecutor V. Nosov to the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Army Commissar of the 1st rank L.

Mekhlis [160]. September 27, 1941

***“On July 10–20 of this year, units of the 25th Rifle Corps, which occupied the defenses in the area of the city of Vitebsk, Surazh-Vitebsky, shamefully fled, opened the way for the enemy to advance to the East, and subsequently, being surrounded, lost most of the personnel and materiel. The investigation carried out on this matter established the following: ... On the afternoon of July 11, in the defense***

***sector occupied by two battalions of 501 joint ventures, the enemy's motorized mechanized units of unknown size (reconnaissance was absent) broke through the Western Dvina to the Vitebsk, Smolensk and Vitebsk, Surazh highways. The indicated two battalions of the 501st Rifle Regiment, having no proper leadership, fled in a panic. On the night of July 12, overwhelmed by the panic of the "encirclement", the headquarters of the corps began to change its location. By 4:00 pm on July 12, the corps commander, Major General Chestokhvalov, with a group of staff commanders and a communications battalion, having abandoned part of the vehicles, arrived at the checkpoint of the 134th rifle division in the village of Prudniki. Their arrival immediately caused panic in parts of the division, since those who arrived, including Chestokhvalov himself,***

***spoke in a panic about the losses allegedly inflicted by the Germans on units of the 162nd rifle division, their bombing from the air, etc. stampede to the east. The first to run were the headquarters of the corps and the 2nd echelon of the headquarters of the 134th SD, led by the chief of staff of the division, Lieutenant Colonel Svetlichny, who had been absent from the command post (“lagged behind”) since July 9 and only by the time of withdrawal on July 12 arrived in the village of Prudniki. Cars without management in a panic rushed east to the town of Yanovich. The stampede of the staff commanders had a disastrous effect on the units and local Soviet organs, which abandoned everything and fled to the east, still not seeing any enemy and not even hearing the shooting. On July 13, the corps headquarters stopped at the town of Yanovich, but on July 14 it moved into the forest near the village of Ponizovye, giving up all control of the corps and losing contact with the army headquarters. Following the example of the headquarter***

***At the entrance to the village of Rypshevo at 23.00, the headquarters column was greeted with shouts of “Stop!” and the indiscriminate shooting of an insignificant detachment of German intelligence; according to eyewitnesses, there were about 10 scouts. Heading the convoy in the first car, the chief of staff of the corps, Colonel Vinogradov, without stopping the car, drove through and jumped out of the village. The commander of the corps, Major General Chestokhvalov, who was following him in the second car, stopped th***

**hands and went to the Germans [161] . Lieutenant Colonel Yegorov, the head of the engineering service of the headquarters of the corps, who was with him in the car, jumped out of the car and rushed in the other direction, through the vegetable gardens into the forest.**

**The rest of the commanders and political workers of the headquarters of the corps did the same ... Being surrounded, under the influence of cowardice, some commanders and political workers, in order to hide their belonging to the command staff of the Red Army, tore off their insignia and buttonholes, exchanged their military uniforms for civilian suits, and some of them even destroyed their personal and party documents. The head of the political department of the corps, regimental commissar Lavrentiev, destroyed the party card, exchanged his command uniforms for a torn suit of a "prisoner", let go of his beard, hung his knapsack over his shoulders and, like a coward and a loafer, moved for several days behind the units, doing nothing, demoralizing the personnel with his outward appearance. view. When he was offered a military uniform, he refused and went east in his "prisoner" costume. Also, Brigadier Commissar Kofanov, Colonel Stulov, the head of the special department of the corps, senior lieutenant of state security Bogatko, made their way through the military commissar of the corps. The latter, together with his typist, dressed in the costumes of collective farmers, po**

From the Special Communication of the Counterintelligence Department of the NKGB of the USSR "On Anti-Soviet Manifestations and Negative Political Sentiments Among

Writers and Journalists" [No

later than July 24, 1943] Trenev K.A. **"I avoid reading newspapers, I am disgusted to read newspapers, sheer lies and eyewash ... As for our country, it is no longer able to withstand the war, especially since it is unlikely that many will agree to fight for the preservation of the existing regime ... We must be consistent. The Comintern was dispersed, it is necessary to revise the anthem "Internationale", the Allies cannot like it ... "(Trenev hinted that he was deliberately moving away from public work and trying to stay in the shadows, preparing a painless transition to the side of the " new regime ", which, in his opinion, will be , installed after the war.) "** Novikov-Priboy A.S. **"The**

**peasant needs to be given relief in the economy, in turning around his initiative in terms of personal farming. Anyway, this will happen as a result of the war ... Russia alone cannot stand aloof from the capitalist countries for an infinitely long time, and it**

***will switch sooner or later to this path, the government will understand this***

***itself ... " Fedin K.A. "Everything Russian for me died a long time ago with the advent of the Bolsheviks; now a new era must come when the people will no longer starve, will not take everything off themselves so that some kind of handful of people (Bolsheviks) will prosper. For the blood shed in the war, the people will demand payment, and this is where it will***

***come ... Maybe blood will be shed again ... " Tolstoy A.N. "We are already now making sure that we have manpower military reserves in reserve - in case that, when the war comes to an end, we still have to fight with our allies for the division and reconstruction of Europe ... In the near future, private initiative will have to be allowed , a new NEP, without this it will be impossible to***

***restore and revive the economy and trade ... " Pogodin N.F. "The terrible life lessons received by the country and almost ended literally by accident with the surrender of Moscow, which the Germans did not take on October 15-16, 1941, simply not believing in the complete absence of any kind of organization in our country, should speak first of all about one thing - this will not continue. maybe it's no longer possible to live like this, so we won't survive ... We have something wrong in the mechanism itself, and no, no, it jams and creaks. There is something wrong with our system. What is good is good, and many things are exce***

***Gladkov F.V. "Think about it, 25 years of Soviet power, and even before the war people walked in rags, starved ... In cities like Penza, Yaroslavl, in 1940 people were swollen from hunger, it was impossible to dine and even get bread. This leads to very serious thoughts: why was it necessary to make a revolution if 25 years later people were starving before the war***

***just as they are starving now ... " Dovzhenko A.P. "The theme of exposing the viciousness of Soviet education, the worthlessness of the Soviet teacher, the fallacy of propaganda and the tragic results of this should become the main theme of Soviet art, literature and cinema in the near future***

***From M. Koryakov's book "Liberation of the Soul" (1952)***

***"... the Baltic States, Polissya, Volyn, Galicia, Bukovina, Bessarabia were occupied, annexed to the USSR, "liberated", in Soviet terminology. Enjoying easy, lightning-fast victories, eating free and plentiful occupying grubs, the fighters and commanders of the Red Army were in a dashing mood. It was the "Stalinist youth", grown in an artificial greenhouse climate, full of faith in genius***

***"the great, wise and beloved Stalin", in the "liberation mission of the Red Army", in the "invincibility of Soviet weapons".***

***The war began ... The unstable ones turned out to be sprouts of faith in Stalin, grown in a greenhouse, hothouse climate. They immediately withered, as soon as the hot, scorching breath of heavy and unsuccessful battles blew on them. For decades, Bolshevism has eroded the younger generation's organic, national faith in Russia; now the assertive hurricane of war had blown out faith in Stalin, too, and the soul of the Soviet soldier was empty, even as a rolling ball. Thus began the confusion***

***In July and August - the first two months of the war - new contingents joined the active army: millions of peasants from Ukraine, the North Caucasus, the Volga region, and the Central Russian zone. Not Komsomol members, but thirty-forty-year-old people, a new - deeper - people's layer, slightly affected by Bolshevik propaganda, the ideas of the "liberation" of Europe, an offensive war. In the memory of these fighters, something else lay: how in 1930 the Bolsheviks ruined individual farms built by their fathers and grandfathers, took away horses, cows and forcibly drove them to collective farms; how in 1932 entire villages, villages and villages died of starvation, overgrown with weeds, sent to settle in the polar tundra, the sands of Turkestan, the Kolyma***

***concentration camps. The new replenishment brought anti-Soviet sentiments to the front, which immediately resonated with the "Stalinist youth", defeated on the borders in the first days of the war. Not only a response, but also a clear design - a direct installation on defeatism. Having lost faith in Stalin, mentally devastated, the young people of the "Stalin era" reached out to the Germans. There were "divers", hiding in the cellars, cellars. The German wave rolled - "divers" got out. Former communists and Komsomol members, as a rule, entered the German service. Elderly fighters dressed in peasant clothes, moved closer to their native village in order to divide collective farms and re-build individual yards. Who did not have a native village nearby, settled in the hut of some village widow,***

***a soldier's wife. On the fields of Russia, a great military, social, political, but most importantly, the deepest psychological folk drama was played out. It is wrong to think that millions of Russian people went to the Germans. Neither to the Germans, nor to the Bolsheviks, but simply - wherever***

## Epilogue

On July 16, 1941, Comrade Stalin personally signed GKO Decree No. 169, which stated the following: ***“The State Defense Committee must recognize that individual commanders and ordinary soldiers show instability, alarmism, shameful cowardice, throw down their weapons and, forgetting their duty to the Motherland, grossly violate the oath, turn into a herd of sheep, running in a panic in front of an insolent enemy.*** The

subject of the study, the task, the purpose of this book was to fill the combination of the words ***“individual commanders and ordinary soldiers”*** with specific content. Transfer the discussion of the issue of the "human factor" and its role in the catastrophic defeat of the Red Army from the realm of emotions, ritual phrases, hysteria, juggling "convenient" quotes to the realm of science; to begin with, such a simple science as arithmetic. "Science begins where they begin to measure" (Mendeleev).

This task is very difficult. Tanks, guns, aircraft can be counted, the thickness of the armor can be measured, the real armor penetration of shells can be checked at the training ground. But how to measure "fighting spirit", evaluate in quantitative terms the qualifications of commanders and the motivation to perform military duty among soldiers? Difficult does not mean impossible. And although the answers will never be as simple and unambiguous as in problems in classical mechanics, one can find both the corresponding objective (allowing for a quantitative assessment) criteria, and primary documents containing the necessary initial information for a quantitative assessment. The first

important criterion can be the structure of personnel losses. The army is not tanks, the army is people; defeating an army means physically destroying enemy soldiers or forcing them to refuse to perform their military duty, the destruction of military equipment plays a purely auxiliary, subordinate role here. Unfortunately, there is no way to compile lists of losses by name or, at least, to establish with an accuracy of a thousand people the number of killed, wounded, deserters and prisoners (the last two categories in the specific conditions of the summer of 41 are largely indistinguishable - first there was a flight to the forest, and then, after a few days or weeks, the transition from the forest to the POW camp). Worse, the collapse of the Red Army was so deep and rapid that the very

the use of conventional military language terms becomes problematic. Is it possible to call a "deserter" a soldier who was abandoned by all the commanders - from the battalion commander to the commander? Is it possible to call the "military unit" from where this soldier arbitrarily fled?

Nevertheless, unfortunately for our country - and to the relief of the lives of future historians - the disproportion between "bloody losses" (killed and wounded) and losses as a result of chaos and collapse (deserters, prisoners) is so pronounced that in order to establish and measure it even the modest amount of information that we have today is enough (a watermelon is so much larger than a cherry that the difference in their weight can be detected even on the worst, rudest and spoiled scales).

Strictly speaking, the first step towards revealing this disproportion was taken 20 years ago and was by no means taken by me. In 1993, the first edition of the statistical collection "Secret Classification Removed" was published, in which a team of quite "official", "status" historians, headed by Colonel General G.F. Krivosheev, published data on the losses of the Red Army by years and operations of the war. There, in particular, it was written in black and white that the number of "missing" was 71% of the total number of losses of the Southern and Bryansk fronts, 77% of the losses of the Southwestern Front, 65% of the losses of the Western Front (this is the data for the

entire 1941 year). In other sections (tables) of Krivosheev's collection, the dead and missing were combined in the general column "irrecoverable losses", however, in this case, the huge predominance of the number of "missing" was clearly visible: irretrievable losses turned out to be 5.7 times more than sanitary losses in the North - on the Western Front (from June 22 to July 9), 4.4 times more sanitary losses on the Western Front (from June 22 to July 9), 2.5 times on the South Western Front (from June 22 to July 6), 7.3 times on the same Southwestern Front in the period from 7.7. to 26.9. Such "inverted" proportions, incompatible with logic, physiology and military history (in reality, the number of wounded in all battles of the 20th century is 2.5–3 times greater than the number of those killed) can only have one explanation: irretrievable losses consisted mainly of "missing without a trace, but there were

The data given in Krivosheev's collection (which the compilers of the collection did their best not to notice and not understand) indicated the general direction of further search. It was impossible to confine ourselves to them only for at least two reasons: there is no detailed specification, the information is too general (for the whole of 1941, along the whole front), and the numbers of losses taken into account by Krivosheev themselves are significantly underestimated. Parts 2 and 3 of this book were written to fill this gap.

It was possible to identify specific figures of losses for the first 10-15 days of the war in dozens of units and formations of the Southwestern and Western fronts. The result of the study confirmed - and even significantly strengthened - the initial estimates. Yes, **there were many times (often an order of magnitude) more missing than the total number of dead and wounded recorded in headquarters documents.**

Formally speaking, the number of "bloody losses" recorded in the documents and their real number may not coincide. And if all our information on the history of the first weeks of the war was limited only to the figures mentioned above, then it would be quite appropriate to express a hypothesis (yes, "express a hypothesis", and not categorically state, as has been done for many decades) that the missing the news actually died, fighting to the last bullet in the environment, alone, apart from the command and headquarters. In some cases, that is exactly what happened.

And there are many such cases. It has been repeatedly shown above how a description of the battle "it is not known with whom" appears in the documents of the Wehrmacht (in the corresponding Soviet documents such an episode is not reflected in any way, and according to these documents it is even impossible to understand who fought there). However, in general and most importantly, the above "hypothesis" is categorically wrong. Those missing in the summer of 1941 are, with rare exceptions, deserters and

prisoners [162]. First of all, it should be remembered that the "missing" did not disappear without a trace. They are clearly visible: both in the photographs of the German newsreel, which captured huge columns of captured Red Army soldiers leaving beyond the horizon, and in the documents of the Wehrmacht headquarters. As shown above, two-thirds of the losses of the Western Front are completely covered by the number of prisoners recorded by the Germans (if we accept Krivosheev's figures - 418 thousand people in the period from 22.6 to 9.7, then the 338.5 thousand prisoners captured by the Germans will be not two-thirds, but four fifth of all losses of the front). In general, until the end of 1941, the Germans captured 3.8 million people, which is about half of the actual number of losses [163], or 85% of the losses indicated in the collection of Krivosheev.

Captured and recorded (which is not at all the same thing!) In the documents of the Wehrmacht, prisoners of war are only one of (albeit the largest) component of the total population of the "missing". A huge number of former Red Army soldiers escaped captivity, and in a variety of ways. So, in 1941, only the NKVD (excluding the activities of army detachments) detained 710,755 deserters (data from



report of the head of the Department for Combating Banditry of the NKVD of the USSR A.M. Leontiev dated August 30, 1944). [499] Despite formal accuracy (up to one person), these reports, of course, do not give a complete picture of what happened.

There is every reason to assume that most of the deserters did not run back (to the east), into the arms of the NKVD, but tried to stay in the territory occupied by the enemy, return to their home, settle in "primaks" with a compassionate soldier, etc. In the summer On the 41st, the Germans looked at this matter "through their fingers" - the war seemed to them already won, and the crops were ripening in the fields, which had to be harvested to the last grain, threshed and sent in the right direction, i.e. to Germany, traditionally experiencing serious difficulties with own grain; in such a situation, there was no reason to catch and keep the former Red Army soldiers in camps, where they had to be guarded and even somehow fed. Some idea of the number of deserters (the

very nature of this phenomenon precludes the possibility of an accurate count) can be given by the number of "recalled". According to the same collection of Krivosheev, ***"939.7 thousand military personnel from among the previously missing and those who were captured were called up again on the territory liberated from the occupation ."*** An unambiguous understanding of this phrase is hindered by the union "and" ("missing ***and captured***"). On the one hand, there is the possibility of "double counting" (first as a prisoner, then as a "recalled"). On the other hand, by the time the large-scale liberation of the occupied territories began (43-44), most of the prisoners had long ago been moved to camps in Germany, and their release, repatriation (and in some cases, enrollment in military service) took place after the end of the war; as for the prisoners of 1941, two-thirds of them could not survive the first military winter. Not all of the "missing" and settled in the occupied territory survived until the moment when they were able to be re-conscripted to the Red Army. Hundreds

of thousands of people died fighting on both sides of the barricades of the civil war (in the "policemen" and in partisan detachments), came under bombing and shelling, died of hunger and disease, were shot as hostages, as "accomplices of partisans", as "accomplices occupiers, etc. Finally, we should not forget that in 1943–1944, the so-called mass occupation took place on the territories of the USSR liberated from German occupation. "conscription directly to military units." In practice, this meant that the discovered men of military age without

extra sentimentality was sent "to atone for guilt" directly into battle, often without even changing them into military uniforms; these people were not taken into account in any documents of the mobilization Directorate of the General Staff, how many of them there were and how many of them died - no one knows.

Another group of facts, which convincingly (albeit indirectly) testifies that the majority of the missing did not die in battle, is connected with the numbers of losses of the Wehrmacht. On a huge number of examples, private and general, it was shown that the losses of the Wehrmacht were phenomenally low: 40-50-60 people, including the wounded and sick, per division per day. German losses turned out to be dozens of times (!) less than the losses of the Red Army formations that opposed them. And here we will either have to assume that the Red Army soldiers fired paper balls at the Germans, or admit that there were many times fewer shooters than the "missing" ones.

The proportions of losses of military equipment (tanks) of the Red Army completely repeat the proportions of losses of personnel and lead us to similar conclusions about the causes of these losses. The phenomenon revealed and described in The Barrel and Hoops - an unusually high rate and scale of non-combat losses of tanks ("tank death") - found unconditional confirmation on hundreds of pages of primary documents of the headquarters of the Red Army. Within 7-10 days (sometimes much faster), Soviet tank divisions lose all (or almost all) of their tanks, but at the same time, combat losses clearly reflected in the documents are 15-20, at most 25 percent of their original strength; all the rest are lost without the influence of the enemy (if you do not include the very fact of the outbreak of war in the category of "enemy influence"). It was this unparalleled "tank death" in history that led the Southwestern Front to contrive to irrevocably lose 50 times more tanks than the enemy.

The documents of the headquarters of the Red Army testify to the absolutely incredible proportions of the losses of tanks and tankers. If in the tank divisions of the Wehrmacht for one irretrievably lost tank there are 30-40 (sometimes 70-80) killed and wounded people, then in the Soviet tank divisions the recorded losses of personnel are only 2-3-4 times more than the losses of tanks; in cases where documents allow us to establish the losses not only of the entire division, but also of tank regiments (for example, the 32nd, 34th and 37th TD of the South-Western Front), it turns out that there are two people for three irretrievably lost tanks (killed and/or injured).

Perhaps the most accurate and objective assessment of the actions of the Soviet tank forces can be found in enemy documents. where the Soviet

tanks disappear by the thousands (Southwestern Front), the Germans lose at most one or two hundred anti-tank guns. German anti-aircraft units, allegedly repelling the strike of hundreds of Soviet "new types" tanks (KV and T-34), lose only a few dozen people killed and wounded. Where a tank regiment of the Red Army was supposed to fight, the documents of the Wehrmacht headquarters note the appearance of "separate small groups of tanks"; where an avalanche of a thousand tanks of the 6th mechanized corps was supposed to crush a Wehrmacht infantry division into a cake, German documents noted the appearance of 100-200 tanks. Even if, contrary to all logic, we assume that the German reports were compiled with a zero level of postscripts, then even in this case it turns out that the Germans did not see at least two-thirds of the available number of Soviet tanks on the battlefield.

Another very informative criterion for assessing the number of "individual commanders and ordinary soldiers who have shown instability, alarmism, shameful cowardice" is the pace of the enemy's advance. This indicator, unlike many of those mentioned above, lends itself to an accurate mathematical assessment: there are text documents of the Wehrmacht headquarters, there are operational maps of the German General Staff, everything is perfectly visible. The German infantry advances at a rate of 15-20 km per day, while managing to destroy hundreds of concrete pillboxes and cross full-flowing rivers one after another (isolated exceptions - almost all of them were mentioned in the previous chapters of our book - only confirm this general pattern). The Germans had absolutely no time to fight at such a pace of advance; This is not a war, but a victory march. It is possible to combine the reality of this march with propaganda incantations about "stubborn battles and fierce resistance of the Red Army", but only on one assumption: only a small part of the huge Soviet army fiercely resisted.

Finally, indirect, but very eloquent evidence is the very state (i.e., the almost complete absence) of the operational documents of the Red Army headquarters. Let me remind you once again that the commander of a division or corps does not fight alone, there are more than one and a half hundred people in the headquarters of the formation, half of them are senior commanders; there are only two dozen clerks and clerks alone. What were all these people doing if they could not prepare two operational reports a day, or if they could not put this thin stack of papers in their bosoms and take them out with them

when they retreated? However, who was to take out the headquarters documents, if the headquarters themselves, along with the commanders, disappeared en masse?

command staff of the Red Army is simply stunning: - 163

division (brigade) commanders; - 221

chief of staff of the division (brigade); - 1114

regimental commanders.

This is a list of commanders of the Ground Forces (excluding aviation commanders who did not return from a sortie) who went missing during the entire war. **[500]** Taking into account that the staff of one rifle division required one commander, one chief of staff and five regimental commanders, we come to the conclusion that an officer corps was missing, sufficient in number to staff the command staff of 150-200 divisions.

Now let's move on from simple arithmetic to military history. Let's start with the fundamental research of N.N. Golovin, Russia's Military Efforts in the World War [164]. The Lieutenant General of the Russian Imperial Army completed work on this book in 1939, and at that time there was only one "world war", without serial numbers. A very voluminous section of the book is devoted to the analysis of the structure of losses of the personnel of the Russian army. **[501]** Using a huge array of documents - Russian, German, Austrian - Golovin reveals the ratio of "bloody losses" (killed and wounded) and the number of prisoners.

In general, for the entire war and for all branches of the Russian army, the ratio is 61 to 39. "Bloody losses" are more than one and a half times the number of prisoners. This indicator becomes significantly worse (Golovin calls it "the moral resilience of the troops") in the summer campaign of 1915, a period of heavy defeats and a deep retreat of the Russian army. Much worse - it is 59 to 41 ("bloody losses" are still more than the number of prisoners). For those who have forgotten, let me remind you that we are talking about a war that was characterized in all Soviet textbooks as "imperialist", "anti-people", "a massacre alien to the interests of the working people, organized by the government of the landlords and capitalists". It is noteworthy that modern Russian "patriots of the Soviet Union" do not actively oppose such assessments and are in no hurry to call the First World War "Patriotic War".

There were, however, in the structure of the Russian army military units manned according to the estate principle, in which the attitude towards war (any war) was fundamentally different. These are the Cossacks and the Imperial Guard; men who have been brought up in a long line of generations in the spirit of unconditional loyalty to the oath. In the Cossack units, the ratio of "bloody losses" and prisoners was (for the entire war) 94 to 6, in the guard - 91 to 9.

The Russian army began to fall apart (like a barrel from which the hoops were knocked down) only after the February Revolution. In the summer campaign of 1917, "bloody losses" become less than the losses of prisoners (45 to 55); however, by that time, any figures of losses at the front were already blocked by a huge stream of desertion. Golovin assesses the situation in the summer of 1917 with the following words: ***"There can be no doubt that here we are dealing exclusively with the corrupting influence of the revolution. The mass of Russian soldiers does not want to fight, and for every ten heroes who shed blood for the Motherland, there are twelve or thirteen who have abandoned their weapons."***

Unfortunately, I do not know how N.N. Golovin (he died in January 1944) a situation where for every ten heroes who shed blood for their homeland, there are 30–40–50 who have abandoned their weapons.

So after all: 30, 40 or 50? What was the real ratio of those killed, wounded and "missing" in the summer of 1941? 1 to 3 or 1 to 5, there is a difference! Yes, from the point of view of arithmetic, it is impossible to equate these quantities. However, there are many differences between arithmetic and military history; one of them is that in order to establish the reasons for the defeat of the army, it is absolutely unimportant whether three-quarters, four-fifths, or nine-tenths of the personnel fled into the forest. In any case, even with the smallest of the above figures, the army, which is not accidentally called the "military organism", is doomed to death.

Since we are talking about such a terrible occupation as war, such a comparison would be appropriate: it does not matter how many parts a person was cut into - into three, four or seven. In any of the options, the diagnosis is clear, you can no longer talk about the prognosis, the cause of death is established with unambiguous clarity. In the context of the heated discussions that do not subside around the "Solonin's concept", it makes sense to note that the motives of the "cutter" do not have the slightest significance for the diagnosis - it doesn't matter if he committed this crime for a fee, while drunk, in a fit of jealousy, for the sake of robbery and so on. And even more so, there is no practical point in wasting time and energy on clarifying the question - did the hacked person suffer from chronic gastritis during

his lifetime or not. In the same way, there is no practical sense in the exercise in which two generations of Soviet historians practiced, and now thousands of amateurs on countless Internet forums continue their work with great enthusiasm. All these gigabytes of words spent on discussing the design of the air filter of the T-34 tank engine, the military genius (or mediocrity) of Zhukov, the percentage of providing aviation regiments with refueling funnels and ladders - all this

empty, pointless chatter. From the very first days of the war, **most of the personnel of the Red Army threw down their weapons and dispersed through the forests**. The motives in this case (within the framework of a military-historical study) do not matter; it **is quite sufficient to establish the very fact of the transformation of the army into an armed and rapidly disarming crowd**. The crowd is incapable of fighting. This is the final diagnosis of the reasons for the defeat of the Red Army in the summer of 1941.

My first book (Barrel and Hoops) was finished a little over ten years ago. Over the years I have received many letters from all over the world. More than once or twice, people, driven by the best intentions, advised me: "Do not touch a simple soldier! Scold Stalin, scold mediocre and cowardly generals, well, if that's not enough for you, you can go up to colonels with majors. But don't blaspheme the common man! Your potential readers are the sons and grandsons of those soldiers, don't push them away with stories about mass desertion, about 6 million abandoned rifles ... "I understand this logic - but I will not follow it. Alas, my

friends, the bitter truth of our common tragic history will have to be drunk unsweetened. Just as it is impossible to jump over an abyss in two leaps, so it is impossible to free oneself from the dope of the totalitarian consciousness by destroying only one half of it. Any totalitarian state, along with the cult of the deified Leader,

spreads the myth of the People endowed with all conceivable virtues. This People shines in the reflected light emitted by the sun-faced Leader, before which everyone must bow his head in obedience. The war to which the Leader sends his People can only be Holy, Great and Patriotic. The participation of the People in the Holy War presents the world with an example of mass heroism unparalleled in history. "In battle, forward, into the pitch fire / He goes, holy and sinful / Russian miracle man ..."

Everything in the world has its price. The dubious pleasure of enjoying fairy tales about their holiness and miraculousness was not given to the Soviet people for free. And the renunciation of freedom, of the right to decide something in one's own country, was only a small part of the price. You also had to live in a barracks with "comforts in the yard", hunchback on overwork for a penny (two-thirds of the population worked on collective farms and even for "sticks"), freeze in line for a rusty herring and drown out the fear driven into the subconscious with vodka. But that's not the whole price! The main payment is the obligation "at the first call of the party and government" to go to war himself and give his children to the slaughter. Where to go and with whom to fight? Where Comrade Stalin sends you into battle, that's where you'll go...

At a high price went to the Soviet (now Russian) people a beautiful fairy tale, everything else was stolen from him step by step, and as a human being I perfectly understand those who shower me with streams of selective abuse ("the last one takes away, you bastard!"). But I understand even better those veterans who, in dozens of letters, told me what a joy it was for them to live to the time when the veil of lies that wrapped the history of that terrible war in a dense veil began to crumble. A calm,

sober look at the past of one's country, a willingness to admit mistakes made, a sense of shame for the crimes committed on behalf of and by the hands of your people - this is a luxury available only to a healthy society that is firmly and confidently building its future. Will Russia ever be able to afford such a luxury - God knows ...

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## Notes

1 According to I.I. Ivlev, who did a gigantic job of studying the primary documents on the movement of personnel of the North-Western Front, the losses of the front on July 9 amounted to 260 thousand people, which is three times more than what was calculated by Krivosheev.

2 Contrary to the misconception that was widely spread and successfully introduced into the mass consciousness, in the first "wave of mobilization" it was not schoolboys who were called up, but reservists who had previously served in the military, including 505,000 reserve officers.

3 Not taken into account so-called. "divisions of the people's militia" and individual regiments; two cavalry divisions or two brigades count as one "estimated division"; five airborne corps are counted as two "estimated divisions".

On August 19, 1941, the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Army General K. Zhukov sent the following report to Stalin: ***"I believe that the enemy knows very well our entire defense system, our entire operational strategic grouping of our forces, and knows our immediate capabilities. Apparently, among our very large workers who are in close contact with the general situation, the enemy has his own people ..."*** (Russian Archive, vol. 16, Great Patriotic War, Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. Documents and materials, 1941 - M.: TERRA, 1995. C. 361).

5 The total ammunition load of cartridges in the infantry battalion of the Wehrmacht included 58 thousand cartridges for light and heavy machine guns and a total of 24 thousand cartridges for rifles. The Soviet standard of 1938 "ammunition consumption per day of intense battle" assumed the consumption of 20 rounds for a rifle and 620 rounds for a light machine gun, thus, already at the squad level, the machine gunner spent three times more rounds than all the shooters combined; in a rifle battalion, taking into account the presence of heavy machine guns in its arsenal with a standard of 1400 rounds per day of battle, the preponderance of machine gun fire over rifle fire becomes even more noticeable.



Tov. Stalin, speaking on April 17, 1940 at a meeting of the top command staff of the Red Army, said: "A soldier who has a 10-shot rifle will fire three times more bullets than a man with our rifle. A fighter with a self-loading rifle is equal to three fighters ... "

7 Actually 198 rifle and 31 motorized; 13 cavalry divisions, based on the number of personnel in them, they are considered as 7 rifle.

8 In infantry divisions, the so-called. The "1st wave" (one fourth of the total number of Wehrmacht infantry divisions on the Eastern Front as of June 1941) were 50-mm anti-tank guns in the amount of 2 units per infantry regiment; however, this did not change much in practice, since such a gun could penetrate the KV armor with a standard armor-piercing projectile only by shooting point-blank). 9 From

books, memoirs and movies, the reader probably knows that the "forty-five" was in service with the Red Army until the very end of the war. But it was a DIFFERENT gun. While maintaining the previous caliber of 45 mm, the new M-42 anti-tank gun had a significantly longer barrel length (60 calibers instead of the previous 46) and an enhanced propellant charge. As a result, the muzzle velocity increased from 760 to 870 m/s and armor penetration up to 60 mm at close range.

10 There has been a long-term discussion about how to correctly translate the German word Abteilung in this case. In relation to artillery, it is usually translated as "division", but it is rather strange to call a division a structure armed with 36 guns. Therefore, in this book, the translation by the word "battalion" is adopted; accordingly, the units included in it are called "companies" and not "batteries".

eleven

As of June 22, 1941, there were 1,142 Komsomolets tractors in the troops of the Kyiv OVO of the Southwestern Front, with a regular requirement of 874 units. (TsAMO. F. 229. Op. 157. D. 20. L. 6 and 9).

12 The foregoing does not mean at all that "aviation was invented in vain." Aviation is radically superior to cannon artillery in at least three parameters: range of "firing", the weight of a single ammunition, and operational mobility. Aviation solves such problems that artillery is not capable of solving in principle. But as far as

direct fire support of the ground forces, the decisive role of artillery in the era of the 2nd MV is indisputable.

13

Of course, we are talking about mass systems that entered service in thousands of units; At the same time, we leave out the "piece" samples, for example, the German 150-mm cannon, which is excellent in its performance characteristics, the production of which amounted to 101 units. for 4 years.

14

In the Wehrmacht, they were called "mortars", although in terms of barrel length (31 calibers) and maximum projectile speed (565 m / s), they were rather heavy howitzers-cannons. 15 Through the

efforts of this propaganda, the most famous saboteur was an unfortunate girl who tried to set fire to a stable in a village occupied by the Germans, the most famous pilot was the commander of the crew of a bomber shot down in the very first sorties, the most famous example of the courage of Soviet soldiers was a fictional story from beginning to end "about 28 Panfilov and 50 tanks. At the same time, hundreds of real examples of the heroic and successful actions of the fighters and commanders of the Red Army were hopelessly forgotten. 16 "Smoke Thrower" in literal translation; the name is due to the fact that the system was

originally developed as a means of delivering chemical weapons and setting up smoke screens, i.e. weapons that do not require high delivery accuracy. 17 For example, in the original (October 29, 1939) plan for the defeat of the Finnish army on the Karelian Isthmus, the following ammunition

consumption was planned: 1 ammunition load for fighting in the border zone, 3 ammunition loads for breaking through the fortified area ("Mannerheim Line") and 1 ammunition load for the subsequent pursuit of a retreating enemy.

18

Hereinafter, unless otherwise stated, figures are given from the reference book "Artillery supply in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945." (No. 3 in the list of sources).

19 The aforementioned defense center of the Brest UR near Siemiatycze blocked the only highway on the 140-km section of the border from Brest to Zambruv, going from the territory of German-occupied Poland through Bielsk to Bialystok.

20 One of the most widespread legends is connected with the foreground of the Kovelsk UR. Allegedly initiative commanders on the ground in mid-June ordered to occupy the foreground of the UR, and stupid Stalin (according to another version, the vile satrap Beria) ordered the troops to be withdrawn and the commanders to be punished. Fortunately for historians, a telegram from the Military Council of the Kiev Regional Military District, sent to Moscow on June 10, survived: ***“To the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, comrade. Zhukov. At No. 59 / NGSN I report that reinforced concrete structures and part of the bunkers of battalion districts No. 7, 8, 9, 10 of field construction in 1940 in the Kovel UR are occupied by personnel of two battalions of the Kovel UR according to a cipher telegram signed by comrade. Vatutin (hereinafter it is highlighted by me. - M.S. ) No. 9/485 dated 4.6. In all other URs, field installations are not occupied anywhere ... Please indicate whether to continue to garrison firing installations along the front edge of the Vladimir-Volynsky, Strumilovsky, Rava-Russian and***

***Przemyslsky URs.*** (TsAMO. F. 48. Op. 3408. D. 46. L. 13.) 21 This list does not include the 10th MK of the Leningrad Military District, which did not take an active part in the hostilities of the first weeks of the war, nor does it include

the emerging 17th and the 20th mechanized corps of the Western OVO. 22 Soviet flamethrower tanks and light German Pz-IIIs are placed on the same line as carriers of atypical weapons capable of solving a narrow range of specific tasks.

23 However, there are documented cases where the shielded armor of German medium tanks was penetrated by a 45mm cannon. This can be explained both by the general statistical uncertainty of the interaction of the projectile with the armor, and by the fact that in the case of several direct hits, the “screen” could be torn off the tank hull.

24 Violating the chronology of our book, we note that in October 1942, when the 50-mm Pak-38 became the main gun of the Wehrmacht's anti-tank guns, a survey of 154 destroyed T-34 tanks gave the following statistics: only 11% of the 50 -mm shells, the board was pierced by 62%.

25 Because after the projectile exits the gun barrel, the only force moving it forward is the “energy force” (school teachers do not like this

term), reducing the mass of the projectile while maintaining its geometric dimensions, and hence the aerodynamic drag (or even increasing it in the absence of a fairing), leads to a rapid loss of speed. 26 It is worth noting that in the

recent history of Russia there was a brief moment when even recognized luminaries of official historical science agreed with this obvious conclusion. So, none other than M.A. Gareev wrote in July 1991: ***“The direction of concentration of the main efforts by the Soviet command was chosen not in the interests of a strategic defensive operation (such an operation was simply not envisaged and not planned), but in relation to completely different methods of action.”***

27 Text drafted on 11 March; On March 17, People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko, Chief of the General Staff Zhukov, member of the Main Military Council Malenkov (this trio nominally had the right to sign the most important directives) and Chairman of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars Voroshilov spent six (!) Hours in Stalin's office, from 17.15 to 23.30, which is a completely extraordinary phenomenon for the

laconic style of the work of the "Master". 28 ***“Oh, in twenty years, after a good war, go out and take a look at the Soviet Union - out of thirty or forty republics. God knows how good!”*** Such wonderful words in the film "The Great Citizen" are pronounced by its main character, the party leader Shakhov (the prototype of which was S.M. Kirov). At the same time, it is known for certain that Stalin not only got acquainted with the script of the film, but also approved it (***“it was undeniably compiled politically competently”***) and left many comments in the margins of the script. By the evil irony of history, the Stalin Prize was awarded to the creators of the film in **1941**, shortly before the

start of the “good war”... 29 handed over on the morning of June 23. 30 Let me remind you that in the traditional version of Soviet historiography, the perfidious and

surprise attack was carried out by the forces of 190 divisions of Germany and its allies. 31

It is worth noting that it was precisely this variant of the enemy's actions that the German command considered the most disadvantageous for itself; available documents testify that in the winter-spring of 1941, at meetings during the development of the "Barbarossa plan", fears were constantly expressed that "the Russians, **recognizing our operational goals, after the first defeat, will organize a large-scale retreat and go on the defensive for some or a frontier in the east.**"

32 The field manual PU-39 defined this term as follows: **"Mobile defense pursues the goal of gaining the time necessary to organize defense at a new line due to the loss of space ... Troops defending an intermediate line must inflict losses on the advancing enemy, force him to turn around, lose time on the organization of the offensive and, without engaging in a stubborn battle with him, slip away from the blow.** 33 Mekhlis was appointed head of GlavPUR (which meant

the status of deputy people's commissar of defense) on June 21, 1941. Prior to that, in the whole of 1941, he only once (on March 13, at a big meeting with the leadership of industry) ended up in Stalin's office.

34 In pre-war documents, the number denoting the day was separated from the letter by a hyphen; accordingly, the entry "M-3" means "the third day of mobilization", and not "the third day BEFORE mobilization". In the Wehrmacht, the notation was different, and the entry "B-5" in German documents means "the fifth day before the start of the operation."

35 Here, however, it is necessary to take into account that the commanders of formations participated in the development of the PP in terms of the actions of the troops entrusted to them; thus, the "secret" sealed with sealing wax in the "red bag" was (at least in general terms) good  
sign.

36 Where was all the rest? 35 rifle, 1 cavalry division, 1 rifle brigade in the second echelon and reserves of the command of the three districts mentioned (Baltic, Western and Kyiv); 28 rifle and 3 cavalry divisions as part of the troops of the Leningrad and Odessa districts; 37 rifle divisions in the five armies of the RGC. And another 58 rifle divisions in the internal districts, in the Transcaucasus and the Far East.

37 To rise on alert was given: for rifle, artillery and cavalry units - 2 hours in summer and 3 hours in winter, for tank (mechanized) - 2 hours in summer, 4 hours in winter, for duty units - 45 minutes. The rest of the time was spent on the exit of the units to the deployment area and taking up combat positions.

38 The word "recruited" next to this name looks both indecent and incorrect - a convinced anti-fascist, Schulze-Boysen himself persistently sought contact with Soviet intelligence and subsequently collaborated with it not for money, but for ideological reasons.

39 V-1 (V-1) is an unmanned aircraft ("cruise missile") with an air-breathing engine, a ballistic missile with a rocket engine was called V-2 (V-2), tests of both systems began in 1942.

40 Such formations in Wehrmacht documents were called "army (motorized) corps", hereinafter they will be called "tank corps" in accordance with their real composition, tasks to be solved and to distinguish them from the mechanized corps of the Red Army; It is worth noting that such a notation was also adopted in traditional Soviet military history literature.

41 In fact, during the open mobilization of 1941 four times as many were called up. This was due: firstly, to the hysteria that gripped the "collective Stalin", and secondly, to the need to cover the colossal losses that exceeded any pre-war forecasts.

42 As noted above, among the documents declassified to date there is nothing that would allow us to name the exact date of the planned start of the Red Army's offensive. Considering that the concentration of the armies of the RGK (Second Strategic Echelon) was planned to be completed by July 10, it can be assumed that mid-July is the earliest possible start date for the operation. The natural and climatic conditions of southeastern Europe make it desirable to end hostilities before November; in this case, the August-September line may be indicated as the "upper limit" of possible dates for the start of the invasion.

43

In the Leningrad Military District - 20 thousand, in the Western District - 24 thousand, in the Kiev District - 65.55, in the Odessa Military District - 24 thousand. In the Moscow District - 60 thousand, in

Kharkov - 58.55, North Caucasian - 48, Orlovsky - 42, Volga - 42, Siberian - 36, Ural - 30, Arkhangelsk - 5.

44 In the text of the directive, there were instructions that somewhat changed - in comparison with the PP - the places of deployment of troops; in particular, four rifle divisions were concentrated in the Baranovichi region instead of one.

45 It should be noted that the ZhBD of the Western Front was drawn up "backdating", after the arrest and execution of the former front command, presumably in August/September 1941.

46 I have repeatedly (in the book "June 23 - Day M", the articles "Three Plans of Comrade Stalin", "The Last Days of Peace") suggested that there may be a "missing link" that allows one to link together such contradictory, irrational at first glance, the actions of Stalin. This "link" is a version of a large-scale provocation planned for June 22–23 — a staging of a German attack (shelling and/or bombardment of residential areas of border towns). Moreover, even Timoshenko and Zhukov might not have known about the planned provocation; Stalin set before them only one task: not to succumb to provocations, and they conscientiously sought (and achieved!) This from their subordinates. There is no direct documentary evidence for this hypothesis, and the chances of finding them in Russian archives are zero. However, no one has seen electrons, protons and neutrons either; confidence in their existence is based only on the fact that this theoretical model makes it possible to explain a huge number of actually observed phenomena. 47 This military unit (originally a regiment) had a completely unique structure that changed many times. At the time of June 22, 1941, it was something like an "infantry brigade" or "division of a

reduced

composition".

48 This number does not include the tanks of the 13th, 17th, and 57th tank divisions of the 16th Army, nor the T-37/38/40 amphibious machine-gun tanks, nor the even older T-27 tankettes.

49 The arithmetic sum over 14 divisions gives the number 761, this can only be taken as a rough estimate, since the process of obtaining new tanks was continuous, and it is reflected in various documents in different ways.

So, in various documents of the same archival file (TsAMO. F. 38. Op. 11353. D. 909), the total number of T-34 tanks in the South-Western Front is defined as 485, 493, 496, 519 units.

50 This also does not take into account the floating T-37/38/40, tankettes T-27,

tractors based on the T-26. 51 For lovers of exact numbers: "Until the 42nd day of the operation, 42,984 cubic meters were used up. m of fuel, 21,011 tons of ammunition,

16,540 tons of food. 52 This number is not a multiple of 12, since two army air defense divisions (275th and 279th) had not three, but two 4-gun batteries of 88-mm anti-aircraft guns.

53 Security division is a specific military-police structure designed to protect the military rear and fight partisans (saboteurs), reinforced by one infantry regiment and a light artillery division; even two such divisions were inferior in all respects to a normal infantry (rifle) division.

54 In general (and not only in rifle divisions), 142 thousand people were called up in the district under the cover of "training camps", which made it possible to bring the total number of personnel to 907 thousand. [128] Arithmetically, this gives 15.6 thousand **people** per each of the 58 divisions, but in reality, about 30-35% of the personnel are not in divisions, but in units and subunits of corps, army and district subordination.

55 These figures are taken directly from primary documents, but the well-known Statistical Compendium No. 1 gives higher figures: 34,779 trucks in the Kyiv OVO troops.

56 In his memoirs, Zhukov tried as best he could to dissociate himself from Directive No. 3 and even made up a story about the fact that at 13.40 he had already flown from Moscow to Kiev, and learned about the Directive only late in the evening, while at the SWF headquarters in Tarnopol; however, from the "Journal of Visits" it can be seen that at 14.00 Zhukov had just entered and at 16.00 left

Stalin's Kremlin office. 57



Traditional Soviet historiography presents Romania's participation in the war against the USSR as a kind of given, an inevitable phenomenon of nature, independent of the actions and will of people. Reality is much more complicated. In the period between the two world wars, the newborn Romania was guided - both in foreign policy and in the construction of the Armed Forces - by France and its ally Czechoslovakia. At the beginning of the Second World War, it was Romania that provided asylum for the Polish government and the personnel of the Polish army, defeated by the joint efforts of Germany and the USSR; it was Romania that became the supplier of precious oil during the war for the Anglo-French bloc. Romania ended the war as part of the anti-Hitler coalition, and King Mihai was awarded the Soviet Order of Victory - and this is no joke. There are serious reasons to assume that if it were not for Stalin's "bold debut idea" with the occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina in the summer of 1940 (the latter was never part of the Russian Empire at all), then in 1941 the Red Army could not have had a Romanian front. 58 On modern maps of Ukraine, these are Gorodok and Veliky Lyuben; Zholkev - Zhovkva, Janow - Ivano-Frankivsk,

Krystynopol - Chervonograd. Przemysl after the end of the 2nd MV returned to Poland, and it is now called Przemysl.

59 Georgy Nikolaevich Mikushev. Born in 1898, originally from the Komi people. Member of the Civil War. In the interwar period - regiment commander in the famous 25th Chapaev division, brigade commander, from June 1940 major general. He died in battle near the town of Kozelets (Chernihiv region) on September 9, 1941, personally leading the counterattack of the fighters of his division.

60 Protection and possible undermining of the bridges were in the hands of the NKVD troops, so the unhindered capture by the enemy of the most important bridges cannot be blamed on the command of the army units.

61 It is difficult to say for sure what real events are behind this strange message. There was not a single tank unit of the Red Army in the Rava-Russkaya area. However, instead of the 17 amphibious tankettes laid down by the state, the 41st Rifle Division was armed with ordinary light tanks (most likely T-26). In addition, the Germans could mistake the Komsomolets armored caterpillar tractor for a "tank", armed with a machine gun in a ball mount on the frontal plate of the hull. "Komsomol"

in the Kiev OVO there were many, in some rifle divisions - up to 50 or more units. 62 Now Mezhirechye,

n.p. 6 km south of Krystynopol, at the confluence of the river. Rata in the river. Bug. 63 In the

documents of the Wehrmacht, a fierce battle and counterattacks of the enemy were noted in the evening of June 22 in the area of the settlement. Lazy and Lashki (5–7 km east of the border near the Shklo River). Some Russian historians report that on the eve of the war, a motorcycle regiment of the 4th mechanized corps advanced to that area; the rapid withdrawal of the defenders, who had already disappeared by 8 a.m. on June 23, confirms this version to some extent.

64

The staffing of the 81st MD with mechanized traction was completely outstanding: 133 tractors, including 20 of the most powerful Voroshilovtsy (it is not clear that they could be towed as part of a motorized division) and 29 Komsomols. 65 An extremely clear illustration of what

a

divisional

artillery regiment with proper use.

66

The tank was armed with a short-barreled 76-mm cannon (similar to the regimental "three-inch gun") in the main turret and two machine guns in the side turrets. The gun was supposed to destroy the firing points of the defending enemy; machine guns capable of firing in the direction of 90 degrees. to the axis of movement of the tank, bore the eerie name "trenches cleaner" and were intended to destroy manpower hidden in the trenches; based on the experience of the Finnish war, a significant part of the T-28 received a "blotch" on the frontal armor and, in terms of its security, was quite consistent with the German "heavy" tank Pz-IV.

67

It is noteworthy that this chapter in "History 71 pd" ends with a phrase that literally coincides with the Soviet Field Manual (PU-39): ***"The outcome of the case is decided by a person who is good with weapons."***

68 So in the text of the report, but this is almost certainly a typo, but it should have been written "to the west of Yazuv Stary", because to the east of Yazuv there is a dense forest, and the enemy was not there that day.

69

Such figures are given in the August report of the division commander, however, according to pre-war statements in the 32nd TD on June 5, there were 98 T-26s in good condition. 70 The

Voroshilovets heavy tracked tractor, equipped with a 400-horsepower tank diesel engine, was intended to solve two main tasks: towing artillery systems of large and special power (howitzers of 203-mm caliber and above) and evacuation (towing) of heavy tanks.

71 For the sake of truth, it must be clarified that before this the personnel of the regiment were thoroughly driven: on June 22, a 30-km march was made from Lvov to Zholkiew, then a 12-km transition from Zholkiew to Krechow, and only after that - return to Lvov. 72 According to

modern historians, the number of those killed was much higher (up to 3.5 thousand people), since some of the prisoners were arrested in the very first days of the war and their stay in prison was not documented.

73 Battalion "Nachtigal" ("Nightingale") was a combat unit of Ukrainian nationalists, created under the auspices of the Abwehr; subordinated to the leadership of the Bandera OUN. T. Oberlander served as a Wehrmacht "liaison officer" at the battalion headquarters, who in post-war West Germany became the Minister for Settlers. Since the activities of this ministry (and the very fact of its existence) extremely irritated the Soviet leadership, it was decided to unleash a campaign to discredit Oberlander. This is how the Nachtigal battalion surfaced on the pages of Soviet propaganda publications with a massacre in Lvov.

74

The remnants of the division on the morning of June 26 broke out of the encirclement, retreated to the north and, having traveled several hundred kilometers through the Ukrainian Polesye, on July 24 in the Belokorovich region crossed the front line. In total, about 1.5 thousand people came out with three guns. Division Commander Major General F.G. Jehovah died of his wounds on July 14, 1941.

75

This absence is very conditional; The artillery regiment brought out one battery of 152-mm and one battery of 122-mm howitzers, a total of 8 guns, which coincides with the number of tractors in the regiment (4 ChTZ-65 and 5 STZ-5). However, there were 10 Voroshilovtsev and 8 Cominterns in the division, not to mention the fact that each of the 312 tanks could be used as a tractor. It is sad that only after the complete defeat in the report of the division command appears the phrase:

***“In extreme cases, depending on the situation, it is advisable to tow an artillery regiment with tanks, allocating one tank company for this.”*** 76 For an adequate assessment of

these words, one should compare the number of lost tanks (26 units) and the number of irretrievable casualties (39 people) of the forward detachment - and these losses included not only the crews of the wrecked tanks, but also the soldiers of the rifle battalion.

77

Two tank regiments of the 32nd TD had 173 T-34 tanks and only 5 BT-7 tanks. 78 In

July

1941, approximately the same number of serviceable tanks was maintained in the repeatedly mentioned above 11th TD of the Wehrmacht.

79

The arithmetic sum of the above number of tanks for three divisions gives the number 741. All other sources give much larger figures, from 850 to 930. This is due to the fact that in this book amphibious and other tankettes with machine guns are not included in the category of "tanks", a large number of faulty tanks of various types are also not taken into account.

80

With the light hand of Ryabyshev, the figure of 500 km was launched into circulation, which is repeated in hundreds of books and articles; if it corresponds to something, then the theoretical length of the route, provided that the units enter all the areas of concentration provided for by the changing orders, in fact, every time a new order was received before the previous one was carried out. 81 There is, however, a document indicating the reasons for

the losses for each of the 47 T-35 tanks. It follows from it that 6 tanks were hit in the battle near Verba and Ptichye, that is, they undoubtedly reached the suburbs of Dubno. Another 12 broke down and were abandoned in July, already during the departure from Brody-Dubno to Zolochiv, Tarnopol. 29 tanks, indeed, "did not reach the Dubno region." Of these, 12 were lost on the march due to a breakdown in the gearbox and transmission ("friction burned out"), which can equally be associated with both wear and tear of equipment and illiterate (or deliberate) actions of the driver.

82

Of course, there were no "landing detachments", but the 57th Wehrmacht Infantry Division had four units with the number 137 - a communications battalion, a sapper battalion, a reconnaissance battalion and an anti-tank battalion.

83 The last sentence is rather vague. Perhaps the following was meant: from the Brody area, advancing along the main road (the Brody, Radziwillow, Dubno highways), attack enemy tanks (in reality it was a tank regiment of the 16th Wehrmacht division), moving along the Kozin, Kremenets road. 84 The Wehrmacht tank

division organizationally consisted of two brigades: a tank division (in which, after the reorganization of the autumn of 1940, only one tank regiment remained) and a motorized infantry division, which was based on two infantry shelf.

85 Elsewhere in Ryabyshev's report, they are referred to as "25 heavy and medium vehicles."

86 In post-war Germany, such books were written on almost every division of the Wehrmacht, they are something between an amateur historical study and a "demobilization album".

87 In fact, he was wounded, captured and died of typhus in the German camp for prisoners of war. 88

Entry in ZhBD 34th TD dated July 6: ***"Frequent cases of hostile attitude of the population. Statement to the fighters: "Surrender, the German does not shoot", "We now have our own power" and agitation of the fighters to the side of the enemy. Crossing the state border (Soviet-Polish border in 1939 - M.S. ) and meeting with collective farmers. Great sympathy of the collective farmers***

***for the Red Army.*** 89 This, like the orders given below, was signed by the commander of the 5th Army, Major General of the Tank Troops Potapov, Chief of Staff, Major General Pisarevsky, PMC Divisional Commissar Nikishev.

90 In the 25th motorized division by July 2, out of the total number of losses in 236 people sick people accounted for 19% (45 people).

According to Vladimirsky (deputy chief of the operational department of the headquarters of the 5th Army), by the beginning of the war, the construction of 97 bunkers of the V-V UR was completed, of which 61 bunkers were armed and occupied by the garrison. **[43]** According to modern historians, by May 10, more than 70 bunkers were in combat readiness.

92

The original document was dated "1st day of mobilization"; further in the text "M-3" was corrected (handwritten above the line) to "24.6".

93 In an extremely tongue-tied report "Results of the fighting of 41 TD from 22.6 to 22.7.41" it is said that the order to transfer tank battalions was given at 17.30 on June 22, i.e. at the moment when the tank columns of the division were already approaching Kovel, in this case it would be more appropriate to say that the tanks were not "left", but "returned" to the Vladimir-Volynsky region.

94

By the beginning of the war, the division had about 10 thousand people (9973, as indicated in one of the documents, but it is not known whether the call for reservists for "training camps" was taken into account there). One of the three rifle and one of the two artillery regiments remained outside the encirclement. According to the headquarters of the South-Western Front, as of July 15, the 87th Rifle Division included 2611 people.

95

In the report of the 1st Tank Group, these losses were attributed to 2 July, but given that after breaking through the border strip the division was withdrawn from the 1st TGr, it can be assumed that the figures indicated in the document reflect only those losses that were battles on June 22-24.

96

Vladimirsky in a footnote reports that "the tank regiment of the 215th motorized division, having used up fuel, lagged behind the division in the Kazina area, which is 15 km northwest of Lutsk." Kazin is n.p. near the highway Lutsk, Kovel, north of Rozhische. From Rivne to Kazin no more than 100 km along the highway; It is incomprehensible to the mind how BT-7 tanks with a cruising range (on tracks, for tanks of the oldest production series) of 375 km could "use up fuel" on such a path. It is even more incomprehensible how such a disaster happened between two huge fuel and lubricant depots - in Kovel and Kivertsy; as Vladimirsky himself writes, 33 (thirty-three) fuel stations were stocked in army warehouses, with such an amount of gasoline the tanks of the 5th Army could reach Lisbon and back. 97 The brigade did not have 107-mm cannons, but they were armed with 85-mm anti-aircraft guns

not 4 (as it should be according to the staffing table), but 6 divisions.

98 There is a stable legend that in the first hours of the war, the commander of the 9th MK (future marshal and twice GSS) Rokossovsky, with his power, seized the district motor depot in Shepetovka and transferred the trucks "captured" there to the 131st motorized division; We have not been able to confirm or refute this version with documents.

99 This brigade became a true "forge of personnel" of the armored forces; its commander and chief of staff (at different times) were the future commander of the 10th TD Ogurtsov, the future commander of the 37th TD Anikushkin and the future Marshal Rotmistrov. 100 In the first

days of the war, Katukov was ill, was recovering in the hospital, and the division was commanded by Colonel Chernyaev.

On

June 16, the 101st division of the 36th Rifle Corps (second echelon of the South-Western Front) began to advance from the Zhytomyr region to the west and by June 24–25 reached the Ikva River in the

Mlynov-Dubno zone. 102 Marshal Baghramyan (on the eve of the war, colonel, head of the operations department of the headquarters of the KOVO) states in his memoirs that the chief of staff of the front, Purkaev, proposed withdrawing troops to the "old border" line as early as

June 22. 103 In ZhBD 48 of the Labor Code we read: ***"June 28. With the onset of the day, enemy aircraft are constantly attacking the bridgehead of 11 TD in the Ostrog area ... Incessant enemy air raids lead to numerous losses ... June 29. The enemy has absolute air supremacy in the area where 11 TD is located; Enemy planes, using airborne weapons, fire at our troops from a strafing flight ... June 30th. 11 TD, which suffered heavy losses during enemy air raids, is in a very difficult situation ... "***

104

For comparison, we note that this is more than the area of the territory of such countries as Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, and slightly less than the territory of Ireland. 105

In

the report, the period is given as "from 22.06 to 1.07," but the document itself is an appendix to the report on hostilities from 22.6 to 10.7; comparison of the loss figures given in the report with data from other

sources also suggests that there is a misprint, and the report takes into account losses from the beginning of the war until July 10.

106

Here it is also necessary to take into account that the loss of a tank regiment and the loss of tank crews ("tankers" in the narrow sense of the word) are not at all the same thing. According to the staffing table in the tank regiment, two-thirds of the personal composition is outside the tanks. 107

By the beginning of hostilities, there were 9299 people in the 34th TD, after the last battle south-west of Dubno, 395 people were gathered, which gives an arithmetic "shortage" of 3.8 thousand in comparison with the loss figures taken into account in the report; however, it must be taken into account that some, not indicated in the documents, the number of people moved beyond the river. Ikva as part of the rear units and the medical battalion of the division.

108

However, as of July 15, the certificate from the headquarters of the South-Western Front lists 1306 people in the 8th Panzer

Division. 109 Based on the strength of the personnel of these formations, a tank or mechanized corps, two cavalry divisions, and four tank brigades were taken as one "calculated division".

110

Perhaps this was due to the desire to avoid too eloquent coincidence of the moment of the cessation of the Soviet offensive with the beginning of the Warsaw Uprising. 111 Without taking into account the Air Force of the North-

Western Front, without taking into account the newly formed regiments and their weapons, taking into account the 3rd air corps of the DBA in Smolensk. 112 The combat log of the Western Front, from

which this phrase is taken, was compiled retroactively (not earlier than July 21), by new commanders, after the arrest of the former (original) front command, including the aforementioned General Klimovsky; it would be reckless to trust everything written there. It is possible that behind the amazing phrase about "oral orders" is the fact of the destruction of some pre-war documents. 113 To provide the fully mobilized Red Army with 76-mm divisions, 5,730 guns were required, and by June 22, 1941, 1,000 guns were available.



there were 6447 pcs. - and this is not counting 2066 obsolete guns mod. 1902/30  
114

The 3rd and 4th Panzer Divisions advancing on Bobruisk-Rogachev were a hundred kilometers from the "cauldron", and the 10th Panzer Division advancing in the second echelon was still in the Baranovichi area.

115

There is nothing particularly "wise" or difficult in this quite ordinary work; the troops had appropriate instructions, instructions and drawings. So, for example, the trench for the T-26 tank was a rectangular ditch 1 meter deep, 4 m long, with an inclined section for the entry and exit of the tank 3 m long; an earthen rampart 0.6 m high and 2 m wide was poured in front of the trench. 116 Kuznetsova, who allegedly "was not afraid to violate Stalin's ban" and brought  
the

fleet on full combat readiness on the eve of the war, did not drop a single kind word about a similar "feat" of General F.I. Kuznetsova. Or did they have a distribution order for one Kuznetsov? 117 Some (no one seems to know the exact figures) number of tanks produced after November 1940 had an additional armor patch on the hull front plate.

118

In 1962, the memoirs of Major General D. Makarenko (on the eve of the war - captain, head of the communications center of the PribOVO headquarters) were published (Bulletin of the Military Scientific Society at the Riga District Officers' House No. 5/1962). He claims that at about 15.00 on June 21, the deputy chief of staff of the district / front , Major General Gusev, sent a telegram to the commander of the 125th Infantry Division with the following content: ***commander families. I order everything to be returned to its place and in two hours to report on the execution.***

119

Division Commander Major General A.S. Zotov was captured. There are different versions of the circumstances of his captivity. The heroic one, told by Zotov himself and included in the pompous history of the division's combat path, is as follows: on the morning of June 22, the division commander (for some reason, alone, without headquarters and guards) went to the front line and came under fire; the driver was killed immediately,

the general shot all the cartridges and was twisted by a crowd of oncoming enemies. In 2006, A. Petrushin published a fragment of the protocol of the interrogation of General Zotov in German captivity: ***"After I lost parts of my division, I headed southeast with a group of staff commanders, meaning to cross the Neman and subsequently connect with the main by the forces of the Soviet troops. With me were: division commissar regimental commissar Berdnikov, division artillery chief Colonel Minin ... On July 29, 1941, we approached the Minsk-Radoshkovichi highway and tried to cross it for two days, but we did not succeed, since German troops were constantly moving along the highway . Unable to hide and given the aimlessness of the resistance, my companions and I surrendered ... "***

120

Record in the ZhBD of the 3rd TGr that the 7th Panzer was the first to reach Alytus division, contradicts all other known sources.

121

Translated into a language understandable to a non-specialist, this phrase means the following: the guns were located 7–8 km from the battlefield, and the crews of the guns did not see the field; battery commanders were in close proximity to the battlefield and corrected the fire by telephone or radio.

122

Of course, he did not run alone. In operational report No. 4 of the headquarters of the Polar Front dated 10.00 on June 24, we read: ***"The entire road from Vilnius to Molodechno is clogged with retreating infantry, artillery and tank units."***

Life was good. L.N. Lopukhovsky, the son of the commander of the 120 Gap, recalls: ***"We lived in a solid stone house of a Polish "siege man", who was arrested by the NKVD, and his family was deported. My mother, after all the ordeals of life in private apartments and dormitories, was delighted with the house, which adjoined a large well-groomed garden."*** 124

A. Beck's book, although it is by all formal features a literary, and not a scientific and historical work, can in no way be classified as "light fiction". All the main events in it are real, recorded - as the author informs the reader in the very first lines - from the words of the protagonist of the book. Baurzhan Momyshev himself is an absolutely real person; he really commanded a battalion in the Panfilov division, then a regiment, ended the war as a division commander, and taught tactics at the military academy for many years. In the Defense Army

Israel's book by A. Beck was included in the list of mandatory literature for command personnel, and this is not a myth.

125

It is noteworthy that Sandalov did not utter a word about them - he understood (or he was reminded) that it was necessary to protect the propaganda myth about the world's first, only and incomparable "Katyusha".

126

Let me remind the reader once again that during the breakthrough of the Mannerheim Line, among other things, 46,000 rounds for a 203-mm howitzer, 6,000 rounds for artillery systems of special power, and 1,677 FAB-500 bombs were used up. 127

This ordinary story received a completely unique development: despite the merciless phrase "the verdict is final, not subject to appeal in cassation," the general was not shot; the execution was replaced by 10 years in the camps, then on September 21, 1942, Lazarenko was released ahead of schedule, reinstated in rank, received the post of commander of the regiment, and then the division. On June 26, 1944, he died in battle, posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

128

Two bomber divisions (12 BAD and 13 BAD) of the Air Force of the Western Front did not lose a single aircraft from the "crushing blow to the airfields", and not a single bomb fell on the airfields of the 3rd air corps of the DBA in the Smolensk region; The 39th bomber regiment of the 1st CAD, based in the Pinsk area, lost 14 out of 48 aircraft by noon. In general, for the entire first day of the war, 650 bombers (including DBA) made only 263 sorties, while crossing the river. The Bug in the zone of the 4th Army was bombed only once, on the morning of June 22 by a group of 18 aircraft.

129

The commander of the 14th MK, Major General S. Oborin, was arrested on 8 July. He was arrested not beyond the Dnieper in Dovsk, where the remnants of the corps were taken out for reorganization, and not in Smolensk, where the headquarters of the Western Front was located, but in Moscow, in his own apartment, where the corps commander arrived on July 6. The military collegium of the USSR Armed Forces sentenced Oborin to death **"for violating the military oath, cowardice and criminal inactivity."** Rehabilitated in 1957

130

The surname in the document is illegible, possibly Gorbukhin. 131

On the well-known and quite authoritative website of the Red Army Mechanized Corps, in the section of the 17th Mechanized Corps, it is reported (though without indicating a specific source of information) that "by the beginning of the war, the corps was armed with 163 guns (12 of them 37-mm anti-aircraft guns **and 54 howitzers**) ". If so, then simple arithmetic shows the presence of 43 supernumerary "trunks"; most likely, these were the very 45-mm and 76-mm guns with which, according to the May Directive of the General Staff, the tank

regiments of the mechanized corps were to be re-armed. 132 Another extremely interesting fact was noted in Borzilov's report: **"On June 20, 1941, the corps commander held a meeting with division commanders, at which the task of increasing combat readiness was set ... the corps commander warned that these measures should be carried out without fuss, no one do not say this, continue your studies according to plan.** The last phrase almost verbatim reproduces the order of the commander of the 12th mechanized corps (PribOVO) dated June 18 (**"put units on alert in accordance with plans for raising a combat alert, but do not announce the alarm itself; carry out all**

**work quickly, but without noise, without panic and loquacity"** ). 133 In the original document, after these words , **"(03.00 German time)"** is written in brackets , which is clearly erroneous; German time was an hour less than "Soviet", i.e. in I

134 The only episode (among those described in this book) with an even greater number of victories declared by the Germans is the tank battle near Aleksandrovka (Voynitsa) between the 19th Panzer Division of the 22nd MK and the German 14th TD. 135

Do not look for in these words a deliberate desire to "shield Pavlov." I do not feel heartfelt love for the man who wrote to Voroshilov on December 21, 1939: **"We must shake all of Finland mercilessly so that it would be repulsive to others; I am sure that as soon as we finish with Finland (regardless of the use of means and methods), both the British and the French will forget about it.** But of the available generals, he was one of the best, had solid experience in military operations (World War I, Civil, CER in 1929, Spain, where the young brigade commander Pavlov arrived one of the first and returned as a Hero of the Soviet Union), had a readiness to manifest punishable initiative (as

some authors claim that in 1938 he wrote a letter to Stalin calling for an end to repression in the army).

136 In the "three heroes" of the Southwestern Front (4 MK, 8 MK, 15 MK), there were even more tanks, including tanks of "new types", but the operational art of the command of the South-Western Front and the 6th Army led to that these mechanized corps were "torn" into many fragments and put into battle at a distance of hundreds of kilometers from each other.

137 An interesting point. The original text of the report says: **"Material part: KV - 51, T-34 - 150, BT-5/7 about 125, T-26 - 42. In addition - armored cars, transport and special vehicles."** At the same time, in all publications known to me, there is neither KV nor T-34, they are replaced by the words "heavy tanks", "medium tanks"; the phrase about **"armored cars, transport and special vehicles"** was thrown out

altogether. 138 "The campaign of 1941 in Russia. 8th Aviation Corps. The text provides an explanation: "The document was compiled by retired Colonel Deikhman (HW Deichmann), then head of the personnel department of the 8th corps, on the basis of records, interviews and the journal of the commander of the corps, Field Marshal Richthoffen (Frhr. v. Richthofen).

139 And not only KV. In the report of General Mostovenko (and his 11th MK was armed mainly with light tanks with bulletproof armor) we read: **"After 06/23/41, the Germans used anti-tank guns and air bombing against our tanks, which burned about 6 tanks."** Six out of nearly four hundred tanks. 140 By the way, this toponym has

nothing to do with a small domestic rodent. The place (and it is very ancient, mentioned already in the chronicles of the 16th century) got its name from the river Myshanka (or Mysh in the Belarusian version), which, according to local historians, goes back to the Balto Slavic "mashaz" (small) or "myshkas" (wooded ).

141

IN AND. Kuznetsov later commanded the 1st Shock Army near Moscow, the 63rd Army near Stalingrad, and the 3rd Shock Army during the assault on Berlin; ended the war with the rank of Colonel General, Hero of the Soviet Union, holder of the Order of Suvorov. 142

This is the western, "small" Berezina, the right tributary of the Neman; not to be confused with the "big" Berezina, a tributary of the Dnieper.

143

On July 8, in the area of Mogilev, the commander of the 13th Army will be seriously wounded during an enemy air raid; died from his wounds in a Moscow hospital on July 14, 1941.

144

On July 25, the commander of the 170th ap major Nesterenko and the military commissar of the 170th ap political instructor Gribkov sent a letter to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the State Defense Committee, in which, in particular, it was said: "In the 37th rifle division, the infantry served as a source of panic ... in the **first in battles, the infantry abandoned their artillery to their will, and we lost materiel**".

145

Hayk Bzhishkyan (Gaya D(i) Mitrovich Gay), born in 1887 in Persian Tabriz, Armenian. In the revolutionary movement since 1903, he volunteered to the front of the 1st World War to fight against the Turks, for outstanding courage he was awarded two St. George's crosses. After October, he took the side of the Bolsheviks, organized in the summer of 1918 in the Volga region from separate partisan detachments a combat-ready rifle division. During the Polish war, he commanded a cavalry corps, was able to ensure its withdrawal to the territory of German Prussia and thereby saved the personnel from Polish captivity. He was arrested in the summer of 1935, which was probably one of the very first cases of repression against the officially glorified "heroes of the Civil War." Escaped while being transported to prison, was re-arrested. Sentenced and shot in December 1937.

146

Probably, we are talking about 105-mm guns (not to be confused with a light 105-mm howitzer!), which are 4 pcs. could have been part of an art regiment of a Wehrmacht tank division; these powerful long-barreled guns were able to penetrate the armor of the KV tank.

147

On July 5, 1941, M. Sorokin, head of the sector of the Minsk Regional Committee, wrote to Stalin: ***"Until 10 pm on June 24, no one knew that the city was to be evacuated. Neither did we, responsible officials of the regional committee of the CP(b)B, know about it. At 10 pm, the secretaries of the regional committee and other senior officials of the city, without any publicity, got into cars and drove, as we later learned, to the city of Mogilev, leaving the rest of the responsible workers of the regional committee without means of transportation."***

148

In the studied documents of the 3rd TGr, its formations and units, there is no mention of the case of a downed Soviet bomber falling on the road and the associated losses of equipment and / or personnel. As for the cases of the fall of a burning aircraft, from which no one jumped out by parachute, then in the combat report of the anti-aircraft division of the 7th TD there are two similar episodes, dated June 26 and 27 (Radoshkovichi district, Rogovo), which, in principle, can be connected with the history of the death of the crews of Captain Alexander Maslov and art. Lieutenant Isaac Presizen. At the same time, one should not forget that the mentioned anti-aircraft division was by no means alone in that area.

149 These are the minimum known data; quite official writings of Soviet historians indicated large numbers: a total of 326 bunkers, including 34 built in 1938–1939.

150 By that time, this settlement had already been renamed Dzerzhinsk, both names are found in the documents.

151 The day before, June 26, all the artillery of the 100th division was transferred to the disposal of the 44th SC, i.e., to a more tank-dangerous direction; a separate anti-aircraft artillery battalion of the 2nd rifle corps was sent to st. Negoreloye (45 km from Minsk along the highway to Stolbtsy). 152 The cases were not

isolated, which can be judged by the surprisingly low losses of the German engineer battalions: ***“The 32nd engineer battalion again showed itself near Zaslavl, together with tanks, motorcycle and anti-tank units, it stormed 22 bunkers, losses were only 2 wounded. The sappers of the 58th sapper battalion as part of the forward detachment of the 7th tank division, together with the tank regiment, neutralized the bunkers on the road Radoshkovichi - Ostroshitsky Gorodok, losses - 4 killed, 14 wounded.*** (NARA. T 313, R 231, f. 160–161).

153 Yushkevich Vasily Aleksandrovich (1897–1951), member of the CPSU(b) since 1919, in the mid-1930s he commanded the 100th Rifle Division and the 13th Rifle Corps. Military adviser in Spain, repressed upon return, released in November 1939, appointed head of the 1st department of the Combat Training Directorate of the Red Army. He met the war in the old rank of division commander and as commander of the 44th SC, later

commanded armies, rose to the rank of colonel-general. The last position is the commander of the Volga Military District.

154

On June 28, most of the tanks of the 17th TD of the Wehrmacht stood without fuel in the area of Stolbtsy, Nesvizh, so the figure of 70 tanks - one third of their total number - could even be overestimated.

155

If you believe the records in the railway department of the 3rd TGr, at 17:00 on June 29, along the Minsk-Smilovichi road, a mechanized column 10 km long left the "cauldron" without

hindrance. 156 The report on the combat operations of the 100th Rifle Division from 26 to 28 June states that the division destroyed 101 enemy tanks.

157

Subsequently, the level of losses in the 3rd TG increased and became quite "normal" by the standards of the Wehrmacht; during the 50 days of the war, from June 22 to August 10, seven divisions and one brigade (900th MPB) of the Group lost 17,199 people, i.e. 46 per division per day. (NARA. T 313, R 231, f. 140).

158

In recent years, the tale that "the Germans seized all men of military age and enrolled them as prisoners of war" has become extremely widespread in patriotic circles. The authors and distributors of this nonsense are not at all embarrassed by simple questions: "Why?" "Who should feed them after that?" "How to reconcile this with the fact that hundreds of thousands of real prisoners of war were released?" Even a certain "order of July 8" is flying around the World Wide Web. Yes, the order of July 8 exists. True, this is July 8, 1943 (forty-third), and Himmler signed it, who had no direct relationship to the Wehrmacht, the war, and prisoners of war. ***"Captured men aged 16 to 55, taken in the fight against gangs (highlighted by me. - M.S. ) in the war zone, army rear, eastern commissariats, general government and in the Balkans, are considered***

*prisoners of war."*

159

There are no details on the document, there is also no signature. However, it is not difficult to establish the identity of the addressee - most likely, this is SA Brigadeführer Thomas Girgenson, a Baltic ("Ostsee") German, head of the intelligence department of the SA headquarters ("assault squads"), who was in charge of recruiting personnel for the civil administration in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union.

160



Documents of the military prosecutor's office (at all levels) and military tribunals are tightly closed to researchers, respectively, one can only guess how many more such reports are hidden in the dust of the "archival Gulag".  
161 The

circumstances of the capture (if any) of General Chestokhvalov have not been clarified to this day. According to some versions, he was killed in a shootout at the first meeting with the Germans, according to another, he was killed while trying to escape; it is only clear that he was not in German captivity for any long

162 It became necessary to prove and defend such an ordinary conclusion only now, after the publication of the first books of Solonin; before that, in 1993, the compilers of Krivosheev's collection on p. 338, without a shadow of embarrassment (and with amazing accuracy!) Established that out of 4559 thousand people recorded in headquarters reports as "missing", 4059 thousand people were in

captivity. 163 As has already been repeatedly noted, a huge number of primary documents have been lost (or they were not compiled at all), therefore, it is obviously impossible to establish the total number of losses by summing up reports from headquarters. Only the "balance method" was and remains adequate to the situation, that is, a comparison of three numbers: the strength of the active army on June 22, the strength at the end of the year, the total number of people who entered the active army (this component remains the subject of discussion and constant refinement). In general, the balance method leads to a minimal estimate of irretrievable losses in 1941 in the amount of 7.5–8 million people. For more details, see "June 22. Anatomy of a

catastrophe", pp. 367–370. 164 During the war, Golovin took the post of commander of the Life Guards of the Grodno Hussars, rose to the rank of lieutenant general, was the chief of staff of the army, was nominated for the post of chief of the Academy of the General Staff, but this appointment did not take place due to the outbreak of the revolution. Actively participated in the "white movement", as a military adviser represented the "government" of Kolchak at the Versailles conference. In 1927, while in exile in Paris, he organized and headed the Higher Military Scientific Courses, which, in fact, performed the functions of the Russian Military Academy in exile.